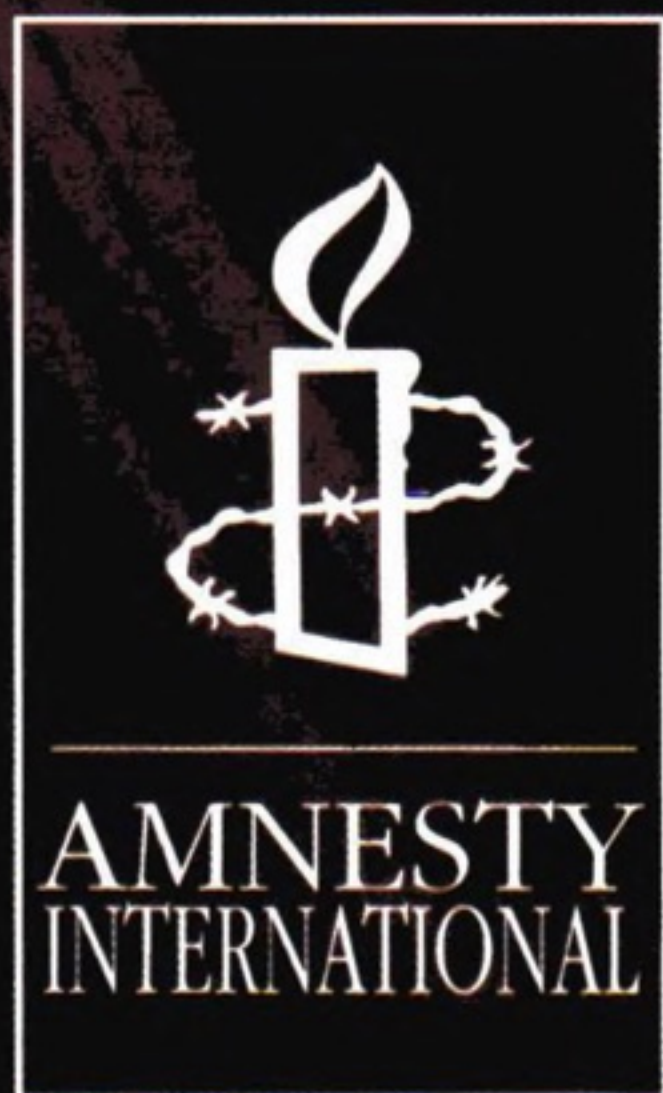




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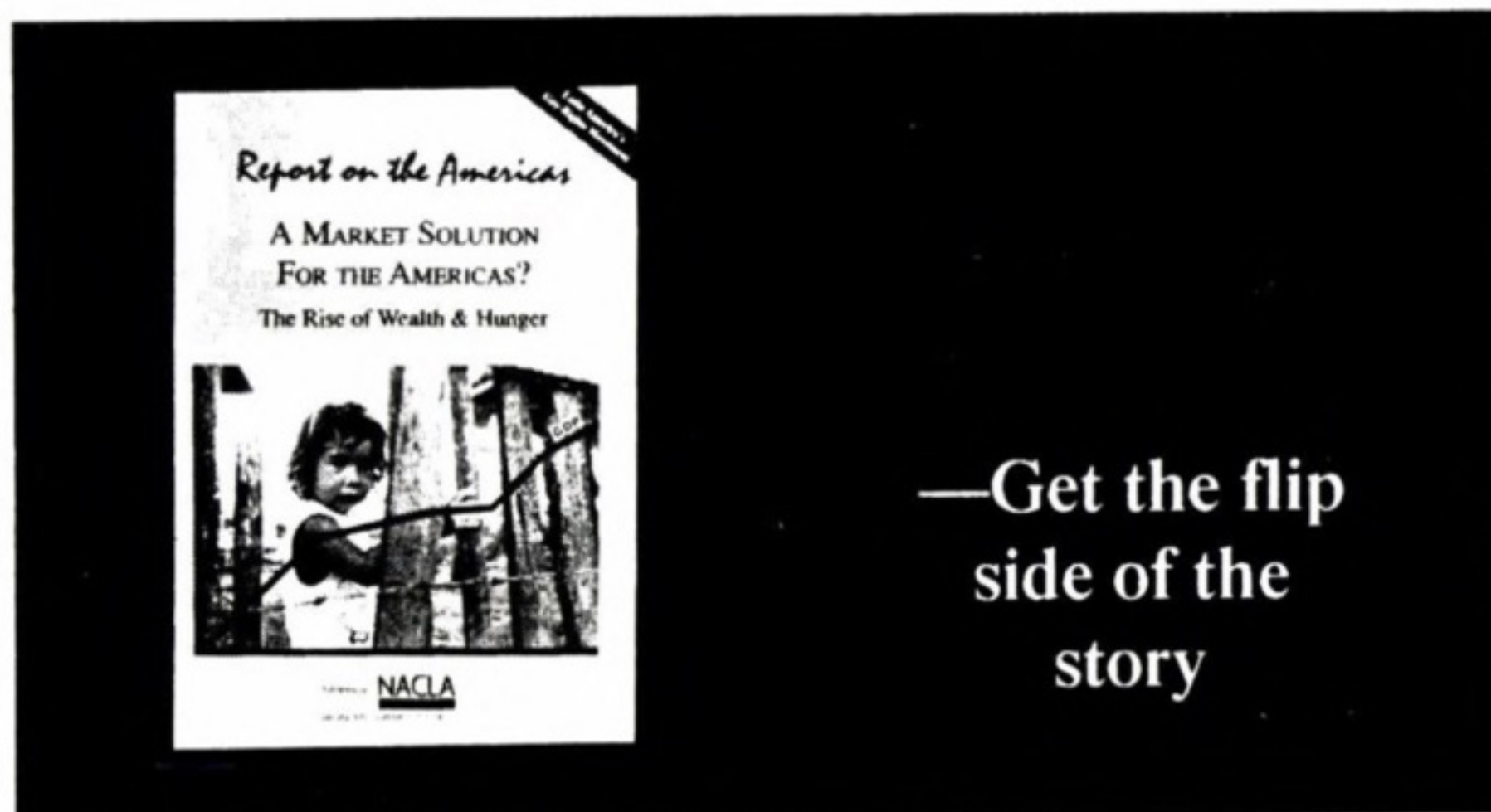
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FRONT COVER PHOTOGRAPH: AN ANC RALLY IN JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA, BY PAUL LOWE/NETWORK.

THIS MONTH'S THEME

Human Rights

FROM THIS MONTH'S EDITORS

THIS month in Vienna the UN is overseeing a World Conference on Human Rights, the first such high-level summit for 25 years. It is designed to do for human rights worldwide what the Earth Summit in Rio did for the environment. 'In other words, bugger all,' the more cynical among you might understandably say.

But let's lay the cynicism aside at least until after the event. This Conference is a major opportunity for the world to start taking human rights seriously. And that's why the NI and Amnesty International have got together to produce a special issue in the run-up to the World Conference.

Amnesty International and the New Internationalist are very different organizations. Amnesty dedicatedly pursues its mandate to take up abuses of civil and political rights all over the world. It gains respect even from opponents for its authority in its field, for its singleminded yet non-political advocacy of human-rights victims all over the world. The NI, in contrast, will tackle feminism one month and African hunger the next, trying to popularize the work of alternative authorities like Amnesty while at the same time stepping back to take a fiercely independent view of the way the world works. We have different roles but, without indulging in too much mutual back-slapping, we have greatly admired each other's work over the last two decades.

There is a certain symbolism attached to this joint project. The World Conference is an opportunity not just for the powers that be to get their act together but also for human-rights campaigners and development activists the world over to realize that they should be making common cause – that they will be stronger together than apart. Amnesty is more ready than ever before to recognize that decent food, education and shelter are fundamental human rights. Meanwhile the NI is keener than ever that the ideas of human rights and democracy, for so long the trumpet voluntary of Western governments, are reclaimed for the ordinary citizens of the world who most need them.

Co-operating with another organization can be painful – you have to come to terms with a different internal culture, with each other's house rules and political sensitivities. Frankly we feared what we might be letting ourselves in for. But our nightmares never materialized – perhaps an indication that the time is right for the wider co-operation we are so keen to promote.

Chris Brazier
for the New Internationalist co-operative

Paul Ham
for Amnesty International

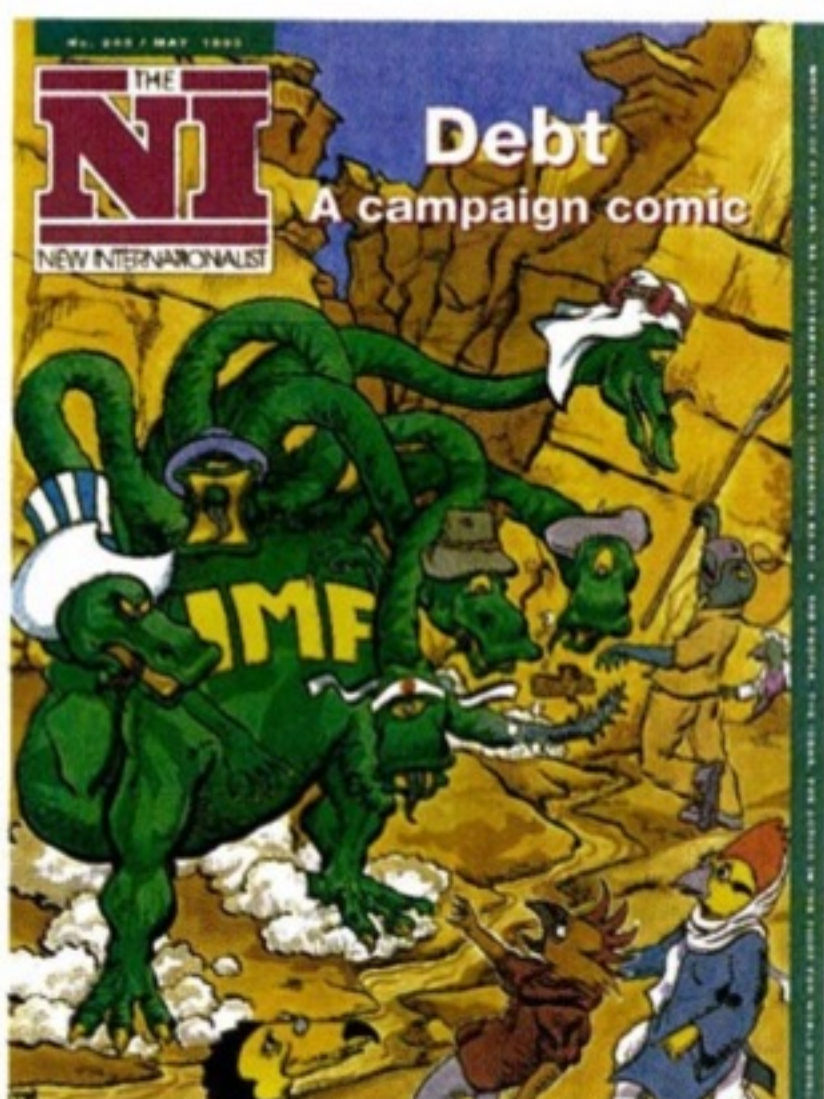
AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL MANDATE

Amnesty International is a worldwide human-rights movement which is independent of any government, political faction, ideology, economic interest or religious creed. Members work within a closely defined mandate: to seek the release of prisoners of conscience – people imprisoned solely for their beliefs, colour, ethnic origin, sex, language or religion, provided they have neither used nor advocated the use of violence; to oppose the death penalty, torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment of all prisoners; and to end extrajudicial executions and 'disappearances'. Amnesty International opposes abuses by opposition groups – hostage taking, torture and killings of prisoners and other arbitrary killings.

The views expressed in this magazine may not necessarily be those of Amnesty International.

Lurid pizzazz

As a comic strip illiterate I was surprised indeed to be gripped by your wild issue on debt (*Alice in Latasica* NI 243). The full colour – if somewhat lurid in parts – certainly gave it extra pizzazz. Brick's a find – let's see more of his work in future.



I also appreciated Susan George's Keynote article. Her 'boomerang theory' is a illuminating twist to this obscene story of colossal injustice – and it seems to make absolute sense.

But why did you not include your regular *Facts* section? It is the part of the magazine I find most grounding and useful in supporting the arguments – particularly important in an issue treated in this unusual way.

J Mortimer
Leeds, UK

Breaking impotence

Thank you for your excellent, informative issue on *Cambodia* (NI 242) and for focussing on the action readers can take to help avert the impending disaster.

Please can we have more of this? There is a desperate apathy problem and NI can have a big impact in helping to break down the sense of impotence many people feel. Greater awareness of the issues is a vital first step. That such awareness will lead to action is the only hope.

Nigel Senior
War on Want, London, UK

Benevolent Pot

Your issue on *Cambodia* (NI 242) was sadly unbalanced. Phnom Penh and other cities were evacuated because, at the end of the US bombing, Cambodia had only a few days' rice supplies left. If the Khmer



The **New Internationalist** welcomes your letters. But please keep them short. They may be edited for purposes of space or clarity. Include a home telephone number if possible and send your letters to the nearest editorial office. The address is inside the front cover.

Rouge had not forced the population back into the countryside and got them growing food again there would have been mass starvation.

Pol Pot did not give centralized orders to kill opponents of his regime. Most deaths were revenge killings by peasants who suffered under Lon Nol and the atrocities were greatest in the north east where the Khmer Rouge exercised least influence. The stories of mass executions were unreliable second-hand accounts of anti-Khmer refugees who had fled into Thailand, a country which itself was bitterly opposed to Pol Pot.

I suggest you read Noam Chomsky's *After the Cataclysm*. This book separates the myth from the reality of the Pol Pot

years – but was omitted in your suggestions for further reading.

John Pateman
Orpington, UK

Cambodian women

Your article by Chantou Boua in NI 242 gave a very good description of the lives of Cambodian women.

But it had one serious omission. It failed to mention the Women's Association of Cambodia. This organization – which I have got to know during the course of my research in the country – has over 1,800,000 members and is actively engaged in improving the standard of living for women in Cambodia.

Viv Mackay
Friends of Cambodia, UK

Psilly psychics

Over the years, I have heard many rumours about how egalitarian and strife-free Kerala was and I wondered about the truth of these statements. In your excellent in-depth study (NI 241) you have investigated and demonstrated that while much of what has been said is true, it is not a utopia but a real state with real problems and with some solutions.

Why was this kind of investigation not applied to your issue on the Paranormal (NI 237), I wonder? What is it that makes journalists lose all their normal rationality, scepticism and competence when faced with the paranormal or religion? On the centre page are lies, discredited years ago, repeated as fact and the books you recommend on Page 28 are merely cheerleading for the irrational. (For a rational read I recommend the works of Paul Kutz, Susan Blackmore, James Randi and Henry Gordon)

I'd also like to point out that industry, business, government and the military are delighted when their opposition consists in a bunch of psilly psychics threatening them with no more than personal transformation. Those in power have always been glad to channel protest into religion because pie-in-the-sky and good vibrations cost them a lot less than working out a national insurance plan or improving working conditions – and do the ordinary citizen no good at all.

Greg Erwin
Humanist Association of Ottawa, Canada



Big mistake

I spent six months in the Indian state of Kerala last year and the picture you portrayed in NI 241 seemed accurate to me. There was however very little mention of the destruction of the state's rainforests. When India became independent Kerala had approximately 50 per cent cover of tropical forest. The figure is now down to between five and ten per cent. This has greatly affected the indigenous people who live in the forest and has helped to break up their ancient communities. Last year the state government passed a resolution allowing selective felling in forest reserves – a big mistake for the long-term prosperity of the forest people, wildlife and ultimately the state as a whole.

Jim Welch
London, UK

Risky horrors

While your correspondent vividly described the consequences of monazite mining in Kerala (*Paradox in paradise* NI 241) I feel she missed some important points.

Kerala's deposit is not 'one of the planet's few' but is a common constituent of mineral sands, and the reagents processed out of monazite have increasingly high-tech applications, in lasers, fuel-cells and bubble memory systems. What's more, monazite contains uranium as well as thorium and this can be converted into fissionable fuel for nuclear reactors and has been tested for nuclear weapons. It is this aspect that makes it impossible – and risky – to publicly discuss the horrors associated with Kerala's beach sand mining: and for that matter the mining of uranium elsewhere in India.

Roger Moody
Minewatch, London, UK

Considerable enhancement

Congratulations on your move to a colour format. I have always enjoyed the informative and sometimes controversial content of your magazine and now find it considerably enhanced by the use of colour.

Arthur Chamber,
Grantham, UK

Aborting difference

In NI 240 on Girls you refer to the use of amniocentesis tests in India to determine the sex of an unborn child and so facilitate the abortion of female fetuses.

You also point out that this method is used to test 'congenital abnormalities' in the unborn and facilitate the abortion of 'deformed' fetuses. Surely this practice is as unacceptable as that of aborting female fetuses simply because they are female? In aborting those not deemed 'normal' society is saying that the disabled have less worth as human beings than the so-called able-bodied.

The process of judging and assigning worth to different human lives is, I believe, fundamentally unjust and its practice diminishes our common humanity.

Aidan McQuade
Tigray, Ethiopia

Rape and torture

It was most inappropriate in an issue concerned with females (NI 240 Girls) that your *Update* article on the civil war in Burma should have been written by a man who focussed on the male-dominated military side of the war which had deprived women of all their basic human rights. The single reference to women in this article: 'The women were subjected to repeated rapes', hardly emphasized a situation as serious as that occurring in Bosnia today.

Our organization, Women's Education for Advancement and Empowerment, is receiving reports of how ethnic Burmese Karen women of all ages are put in camps, raped and brutalized by Burmese soldiers who force them to work as porters. Elderly women are being tortured until their spines and legs are paralyzed and two young girls at Mae La camp in Tka province were raped by soldiers until they lost consciousness.

Marti Patel

Women's Education for Advancement and
Empowerment, Chiang Mai, Thailand
For more information see article on
page 13

The views expressed on the
letters page are not necessarily
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LETTER from LAHORE

You can fly it!

Maria del Nevo goes to two kite-flying parties and enters two very different worlds.

WITH springtime comes the kite-flying festival of *basant*. A cold winter is behind us and the city of Lahore is alive, bathed in sunlight. Men and boys of all ages climb onto flat roof-tops and the sky is full of bobbing multi-colour kites.

There is extensive preparation. From the crowded narrow alleys of the Walled City and the vast sprawling slums of the suburbs to the most exclusive and affluent neighbourhoods, Lahore-dwellers spend thousands of rupees on kites.

But it's more than simple kite-flying: it's fierce competition. The kite's string is covered with crushed glass and once the flyer has his kite up, the objective is to cut down a kite being flown from a neighbouring rooftop.

It is my favourite season, a time when I savour most the experience of being in Pakistan. The excitement is infectious. Although every year the authorities try to prevent the celebrations on the grounds that it is un-Islamic (it is celebrated throughout predominantly Hindu India) they fail miserably every time.

On the eve of *basant* parties are held and even in the dark kite flyers exhibit the most amazing skill. But it is on this night that the police come out in force. A party I went to, hosted by a member of Pakistan's Liberal Party, was raided by police just before I arrived. It was hard to believe it though, as I looked at men and women mingling, sitting around small circular tables eating and sipping soft drinks. On a higher terrace, fashionable young couples stood talking and laughing, boys flew kites and older men gathered around a low table, guarding a crate of whisky. 'How did they manage to keep this?' I asked. My husband laughed and told me that the hosts had 'got heavy' with the police.

I looked around me – this was perhaps the most liberal gathering I had ever been to in Pakistan. There was none of the usual formality and self-consciousness which all too often causes me to decline invitations. And I was relaxed because no one looked my way. As a foreigner – and so often the focus of inquiring looks – it was a relief to be able to blend in for once.

'See the difference?' said a man standing next to me. 'These people are not used to segregation. They know how to socialize, how to

interact freely.'

The next day I experienced a very different *basant* at my in-laws. The men of the family had been up on the roof since dawn, competing with their neighbours. Cassette players blared out Hindi film songs, while some families had hired *dholis* (drummers). The smaller over-excited children ran here and there with sticks, trying to retrieve kites which had fallen and were stuck in the trees. Moni – my husband's eldest nephew – and his friends, were concentrating on keeping the kites up. I went and joined them, but only for a few moments. Eventually I was called back downstairs where the women of the family were gathered. I wanted to ask them if they minded having to stay indoors on such a lovely day and whether they wished that they too could fly kites. 'Women don't go up much,' my sister-in-law said as if reading my mind, 'only the men can enjoy themselves. We have to cook special food for them,' and she went to the kitchen where she stood in her fine dress, preparing huge pots of *haleem* (rice and chicken).

Nevertheless, a couple of hours later she accompanied me back to the roof. Moni was in the middle of a fierce battle with another kite-flyer. We watched as he manoeuvred his string around that of his neighbours until the other fell from the sky and we laughed as he danced the *bhangra* (Punjabi folkdance) and roared with the pleasure of victory.

My sister-in-law and I stood against the wall, talking, looking up as the sky filled with millions of bobbing kites. Then Moni suddenly came up, gave his mother the kite string and she exercised the same skill as her son. 'You can fly it!' I exclaimed and she laughed and said that she used to fly with her brothers when she was small.

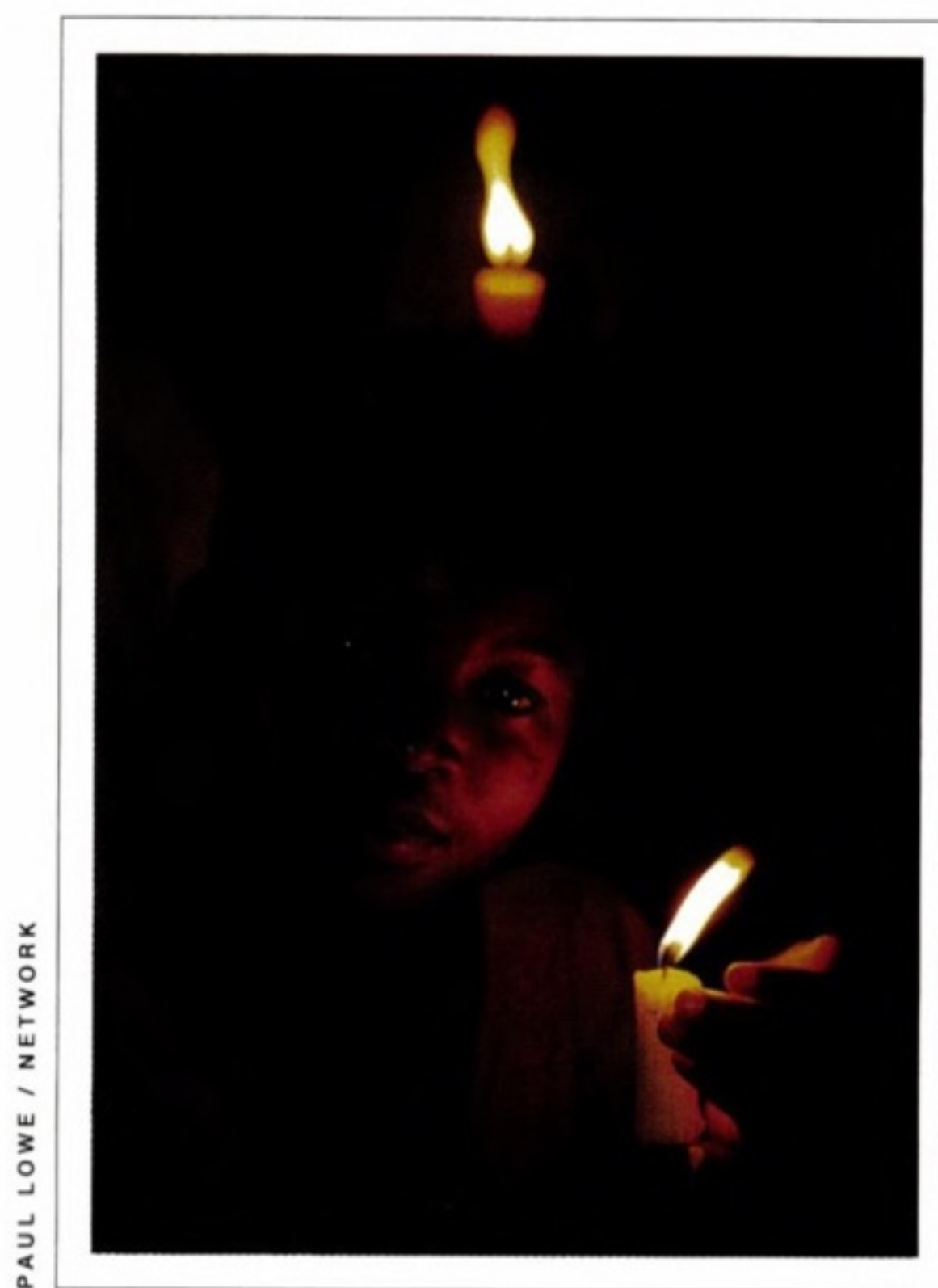
Some boys on a roof opposite began looking our way, showing off and giggling. 'Let's go down then,' she said passing the kite back to Moni, and my heart sank. I desperately wanted to stay up there with her sons, where I could relish their enjoyment and the atmosphere of fun and frivolity which only comes once a year. But instead I quietly trailed after her.

Maria del Nevo is a former NI staff member who now lives and works in Lahore.



ILLUSTRATION: MIRIAM MCCURDY

Waking up the world



PAUL LOWE / NETWORK

*North and South will rehearse their conflicting views of human rights at the imminent World Conference. But the horrors of Bosnia and Somalia demand a new consensus, argues **Chris Brazier**.*

A COUPLE bound together in death beside their home. Children burned with their mothers in the cellar where they had taken refuge. Communities uprooted, ravaged, in mourning. Night after night we squirm inside as the latest news emerges from Bosnia. Staunch opponents of military solutions question their deepest convictions; leftists profoundly suspicious of the United Nations' new role in the world look to it to be assertive; people not usually interested in world affairs struggle to understand how in heaven's name something as appalling as 'ethnic cleansing' could have come about.

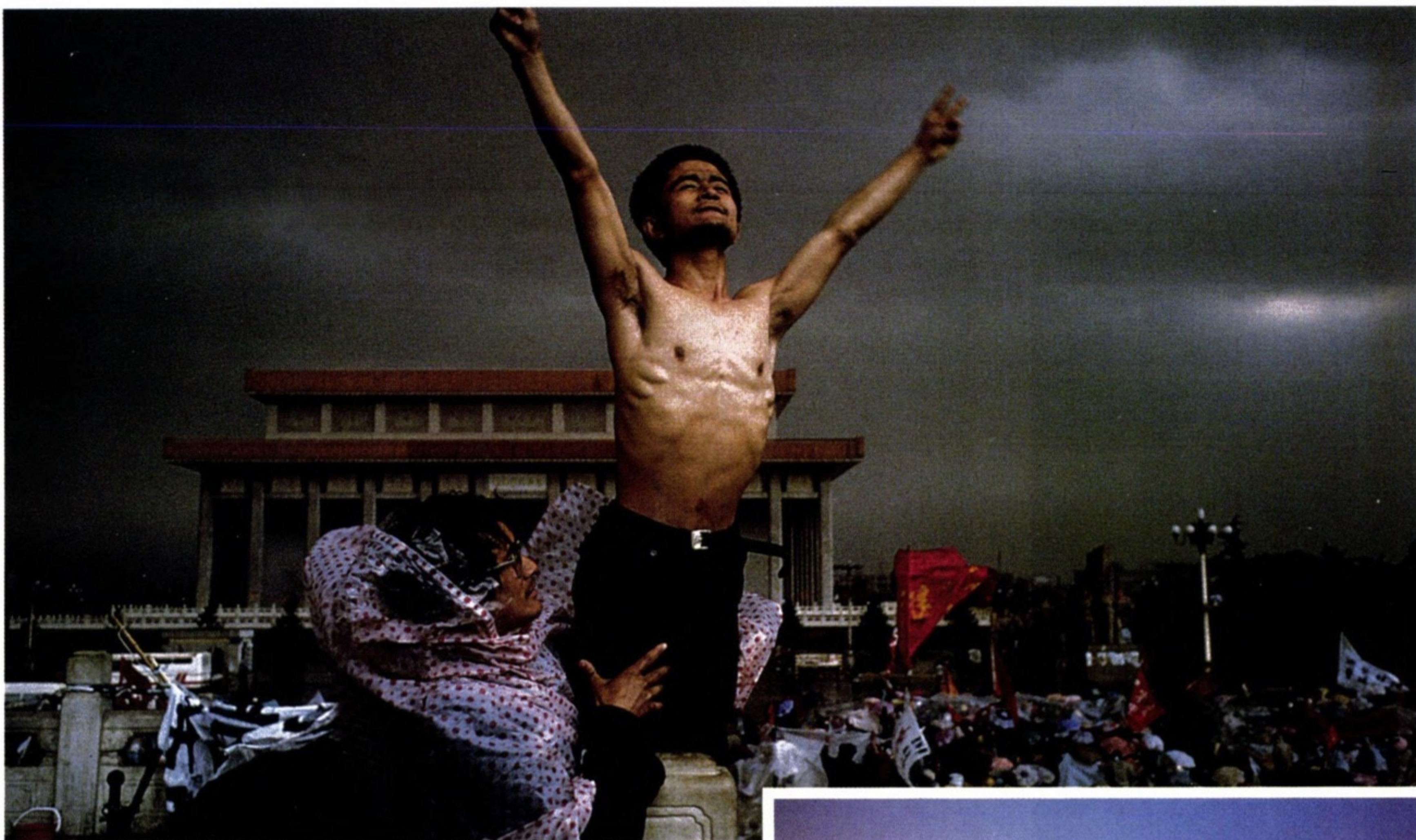
If anything good can be said to have emerged from the Bosnian catastrophe it is

perhaps this worldwide sense that we wish to take responsibility, that this time we cannot turn away and let such appalling abuses of human rights happen.

Just down the road from Bosnia, in the city of Vienna from which it was once imperially ruled, the world could conceivably be about to say 'never again' with more clarity and meaning than it ever has before. There the UN will hold its first summit conference on human rights for 25 years. Full of its post-Cold War authority and room for manoeuvre, the UN is keen to set out its stall on the big issues. Its first attempt was the Earth Summit in Rio last year, which won worldwide attention for environmental concerns while also provok-

ing worldwide frustration at the refusal of the major players on the world stage, led by the US, to put their houses in order.

As in Rio, the World Conference on Human Rights is likely to be the scene of conflict between North and South. Northern leaders are now keen to export their notion of human rights to the whole world, freed from the Cold War requirement to turn a blind eye to abuses by their anti-communist allies. Dictators can no longer expect to be locked away from the justifiable wrath of their people, to be shored up and bailed out by the blessings and bank transfers of the West – and, as if to prove the point, Zaire's Marshal Mobutu looks like he is finally on the way out after



STUART FRANKLIN / MAGNUM

High, so high on freedom – until the tanks rolled in. Before and after the massacre of pro-democracy demonstrators in Beijing's Tiananmen Square, June 1989.



KOICHI IMAEDA / MAGNUM

almost three decades of ruthless repression and personal enrichment.

The human-rights agenda is likely to meet with two separate counter-arguments from Third World governments. The first will charge the North with cultural imperialism for imposing its own view of human rights on the rest of the world. The second will point out that the North has shown no interest at all in altering the global economic arrangements which make it so impossible for Southern societies to meet their citizens' basic needs – the social and economic rights to which the world community is supposed to be unequivocally committed.

The first argument will be moved by governments like China and Indonesia. We will be faced with the comical spectacle of Indonesia's military rulers, who have ruthlessly annexed and crushed East Timor, lecturing the world about cultural imperialism. 'We have a culturally different way of operating,' the Chinese Government will say with rather more conviction. 'Who are you to say that it is worse than your own?'

China has certainly tended traditionally to put collective interests before individual rights. And the Maoist Revolution from 1949 onwards did the impossible, pulling a society that was a worldwide byword for famine, poverty and civil war into communal health and self-sufficiency. By mobilizing all its

human resources and investing in what the community most needed – in the rural infrastructure, in food production, in the low-tech health care of 'barefoot doctors' – China raised average life expectancy from just 36 at the Revolution in 1949 to 65 by Mao's death in 1976.

But there was a price to pay: in the lack of individual freedom which is the essence of the Western conception of human rights. Dissenting voices were locked up, sent into internal exile or simply eliminated; conformity to the ideological trends of the moment was all-important. And millions died in a famine with a new cause – Mao's disastrously ill-judged 'Great Leap Forward' between 1958 and 1960.

China's argument was that the communal achievements could not have been had without the cultural and political conformity; the West's that the price paid for them was far too high. I once felt some sympathy for the Chinese view, from my safe vantage-point of comparative wealth and freedom – but a visit to China and Tibet 10 years after Mao's death helped to erode it.

Diary entry, Tibet 1986: On the buses here in Lhasa the Chinese routinely cover their

faces with handkerchiefs to protect themselves from Tibetan 'germs'. As a visual image it sums up perfectly how they see this country they have colonized: as an arid wasteland full of backward peasants with a feudal mentality. They fly in food, install electricity in the main towns and say they are crusading to raise the material quality of life.

But those resources flow naturally towards Chinese colonists rather than local people – and not at all towards Tibetans in the rural areas, who seem (for better or worse) utterly untouched by the twentieth century. This is a bitterly bleak and hostile land: you look at it and wonder how people can ever have made their home here. And yet perhaps it is that very bleakness which renders material comfort much less important to the Tibetans than the sense of cultural self-respect which the Chinese have tried and failed to extinguish.

Any residual sympathy I had for the Chinese Government view vanished in

STUART FRANKLIN / MAGNUM



One voice can be louder than a thousand – standing up to the Chinese military machine.

those terrible moments in 1989 when the tanks rolled into Tiananmen Square. The ruthless massacre of those idealistic students, so high on freedom, and the repression that followed made it clearer than ever that we should not have to choose between the two different kinds of human rights, between freedom from want and freedom to express. We should demand both – not just for ourselves but for all the world's citizens.

All societies have to strike a balance between individual liberty and communal needs. But if we are asked to choose one and do without the other then we can be pretty clear that the wrong people are doing the asking.

The second argument likely to be advanced by the South at the World Conference, though, has a great deal more weight. Why should they take the North seriously in its crusade for civil and political rights when it seems to care so little for the basic needs of so many of the world's citizens? These social and economic rights are supposed to have equal weight in the UN's own Human Rights Charter but they are plainly impossible to deliver within a global economy functioning as it currently does.

Northern leaders now see democracy and human rights as virtually synonymous with structural adjustment, the infernal machine of the IMF and the World Bank. Most countries in the Third World are as a result having to 'adjust' their economies to the strangling specifications of these financial institutions – if they do not they will be denied aid, credit or trading good favour.

The adjustment always takes the same form: public spending on food subsidies, health and education is slashed while the economy is reshaped to fit the needs of the global market. The supposed goal is for

these brave new adjusted economies to trade their way out of poverty. Yet when they try to do so the rich world's trading blocs deny them access – and IMF campaigns to bring down *those* barriers are notable by their absence.

Meanwhile the first people to suffer as public spending is savaged are inevitably the poor, who the world over spend much more of their income on food and have greater need of public services. The results are difficult to quantify – but none the less real for that. When children in the Ghanaian capital Accra die of everyday diseases from which a local clinic would once have saved them, there is no statistician waiting to separate out their deaths from those which would have happened anyway. You don't find amongst the World Bank's myriad statistical tables one detailing the full human price of structural adjustment. But go to almost any country of the Third World, walk the streets of its shanty towns and talk to people about their lives, and then you will know more than enough.

The North's equation of adjustment with human rights becomes even more insulting when some Southern governments are clamping down on dissent in order to squeeze their people into the new economic straitjacket. In Ivory Coast, for example, the Government used the protest against its adjustment program as an excuse to round up critics. 'Last year we went through a tough period cleansing the economy,' said its prime minister, Alasane Ouattara. 'Now it is time to cleanse the political environment.'

The North cannot expect a new and universal commitment to civil and political rights while it continues to export economic misery to the world's poorer citizens; it

must make a new commitment of its own to their social and economic rights. But the case for freedom from torture or repression is not the intellectual property of Washington or Brussels – which is fortunate given their recent and consistent complicity in grotesque abuses by their allies (see Page 15). The case for such freedom, rather, is absolute and unanswerable. We are back in the grim purlieu of the police state.

Letter from South Africa, 1987: I haven't found the right girl for the film² yet but the stories I hear become more harrowing each day. Today, in the black township of Katlehong, a 14-year-old girl told me how she had been given electric-shock treatment by police trying to get her to give names of 'troublemaking' comrades. Reading about human-rights abuses in a distant country is very different, to say the least, from sitting in the kitchen with a schoolgirl and hearing her talk, haltingly, reticently, about torture. What kind of mentality is it that can justify to itself the torture of children?

How can the World Conference on Human Rights set about undermining the future torturers and death squads, the future 'ethnic cleansers'? Statements of new resolve are all very fine but some practical commitment has to emerge as well.

At the moment the UN's Commission on Human Rights is notoriously weak, one of the most underfunded and powerless UN agencies of all. Whenever it wants to do something it has to get special licence from the General Assembly instead of taking action on its own. That automatically means it falls victim both to the geopolitical manoeuvring of member governments and to absurd bureaucratic delay.

Iraq provides an illuminating example of the current UN human-rights mechanism in

'Where are they holding my daughter?' Mothers of the 'disappeared' in Guatemala.



JAMES NACHTWEY / MAGNUM

(in)action. Human-rights abuses in Iraq have been systematic and serious ever since Saddam Hussein came to power in 1979, yet the UN Commission on Human Rights only appointed a Special Rapporteur for the country after the invasion of Kuwait. When that Special Rapporteur on Iraq eventually made a first report he called for the urgent dispatch of a team of human-rights monitors to investigate violations, visit places of detention and observe trials: (this) 'exceptionally grave situation,' he wrote, 'demands an exceptional response'. The Commission passed the request on to the General Assembly, which expressed deep concern but took no action, sending the proposal back to the Commission's 1993 session – in other words a full year after the situation was considered urgent and grave. And if this is what happens in post-Gulf War Iraq, the focus of so much of the UN Security Council's ire, then you can imagine what happens in lower-priority areas of

the globe – or why Nobel Peace Prize winner Rigoberta Menchu's long campaign to have a Special Rapporteur attached to her native Guatemala has been unsuccessful.

The World Conference needs to recognize this disastrous ineffectuality and urge that the General Assembly appoints a Special Commissioner for Human Rights with the power to act independently.

This may sound like an unpromisingly technical proposal: how could the appointment of yet another UN bureaucrat do any good? But it would mark a major shift in priorities. At the moment, as Amnesty says, 'There is a clear lack of political will on the part of member states of the UN to confer on its human-rights mechanisms the necessary status, authority and capacity for action... Respect for human rights is one of the founding principles of the UN yet its human-rights program accounts for less than one per cent of the overall budget of the organization.'³



BERRY-LIAISON / GAMMA

The bright colours of hope: human-rights campaigner Rigoberta Menchu on her return to Guatemala from exile after winning the Nobel Peace Prize.

Postal power

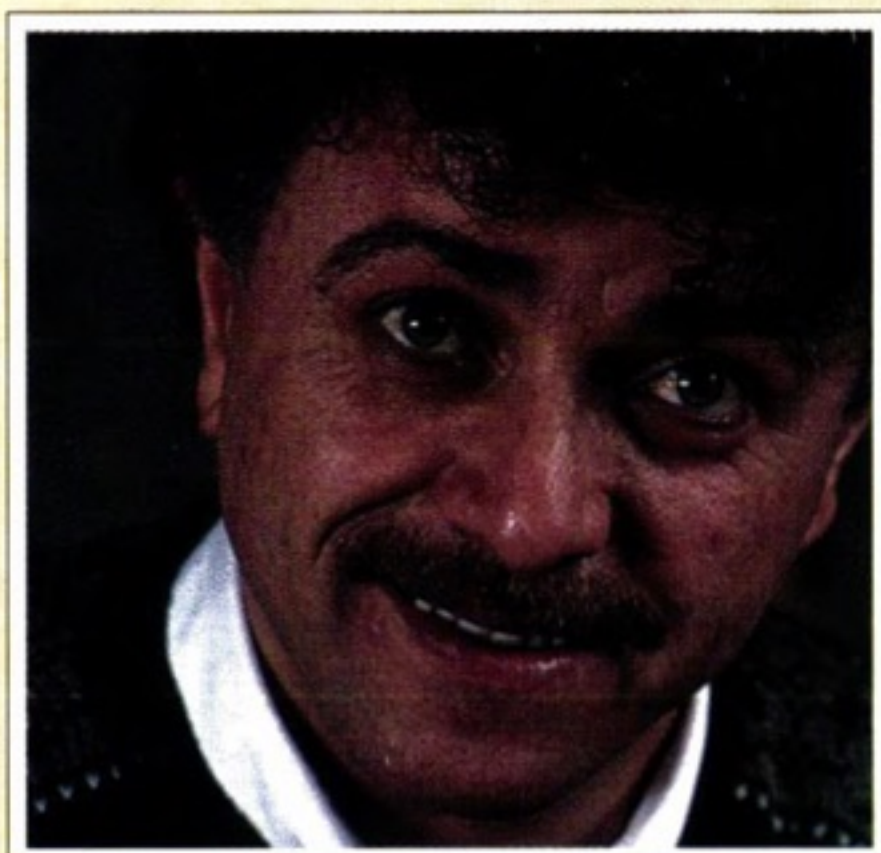
Ilker Demir, a 39-year-old Turkish journalist, spent seven years in military and civilian prisons before his release in 1991. He was tortured and beaten many times and spent a total of six months on hunger strike in protest at prison conditions. He is now meeting some of the people whose letters helped secure his release.

I WAS working as an editor, in 1980, when the military coup took place. I lived 'underground' and was sought by the police until 2 April 1984 when I was captured in Istanbul. I was sentenced to a total of 48 years and one month for publishing political writings about equality, peace, democracy, freedom and human rights. Before the military coup, publishing 'communist propaganda' was technically illegal but in practice the prohibition was not applied because democratic public opinion was strong. For this reason I was acquitted in cases brought against me but after the coup, military courts overturned acquittals by civilian courts.

I never believed that I would serve the sentence because the things I defended in my publication were legal and proper values accepted by every civilized society. In any democratic state such ideas are not considered a crime. To think and to be able to express one's thought is the primary right of a human being. And if I was to be imprisoned for expressing such ideas then I was happy to go to prison.

But I believed that democratic forces in the world would, in one way or another, prevent such an injustice. And just as I had thought, the pressure brought by democratic elements throughout the world to abolish the restrictions on freedom of expression began, after 1988, to take effect, and the newly elected Turkish authorities started to talk of repealing those

articles of the penal code under which prisoners of conscience were being held. Eventually I was released on 14 April 1991, having served seven years and 12 days in prison. Three months later all Turkish prisoners – political and criminal – were released from that jail but the Kurds remained.



The efforts of Amnesty International and other human-rights organizations had a direct, immediate and personal effect on the Turkish Government – and for those of us who were in prison, the interest shown in us brought warmth and hope.

In the military prison the officers did not allow us to get mail in foreign languages. But in 1987 I was moved to a civilian prison where I suddenly began receiving armfuls of cards and letters – about 300 every day. During the entire time I was in prison I received 20,000 letters. The guards brought them in for me in carrier bags. They would say 'the post office is working just for you'.

I didn't know any English at the time – I had to ask other prisoners what the cards said. But it was from those letters that I began to learn English. The letters broke through the social isolation of prison and made me feel merely physically restricted. They came not only from Amnesty but from Quakers, International PEN, church groups and journalists' organizations. It is not possible here for me to express my gratitude fully.

Amnesty also recommends that the Commissioner should be responsible for co-ordinating the UN's response to the abuse of women's human rights, which have barely been considered as a special need within the field – and again the lessons of Bosnia with its rape camps may have the effect of spurring the UN into taking women's human rights more seriously (see Page 13). The Commissioner could also give greater attention to the needs of children, indigenous peoples, the disabled, those with HIV and AIDS – at the moment the UN talks about the need to protect the rights of these groups but does very little to monitor abuses and still less to implement that protection.

The Vienna Conference represents a great opportunity to wake up the world, for human rights to be taken seriously by governments instead of left to the monitoring and campaigning of voluntary organizations. But even if world leaders do not grasp the nettle there will still be something we can all do. If Amnesty's success over the years in raising the level of global concern about human rights has shown us anything it is that ordinary people's activism and commitment can make a difference. You might think that a letter to a despotic political leader about a prisoner locked in some dingy cell far away from light and hope is bound for nowhere but the wastepaper bin beside the President's junior under-letter-opener. But in some cases it can genuinely help work wonders, as the testimony of Turkish prisoner Ilker Demir makes clear (see box). Believe it – we can make a difference. ■

¹ Quoted in the London *Financial Times*, 9 March 1992. ² *Girls Apart*, a New Internationalist film, 1987. ³ *Facing Up to the Failures: Proposals for Improving the Protection of Human Rights by the United Nations*, Amnesty International, December 1992.

That helpless, heartstopping night

Some Third World governments claim they should not be expected to abide by notions about human rights which derive from Western liberal culture. Nigerian Emmanuel Onwe begs to differ – and tells a painful personal story to explain why.



My attitude towards human rights stems from two bitter personal experiences. During the Nigerian Civil War (1967-1970), my father was abducted by secret agents of the federal forces, tortured and starved of food and drink for 16 days, and then taken on a boat to the middle of a river where he was decapitated while his hands were manacled behind him. His major sin was his wealth which was needed to aid the prosecution of the war. Thousands of other innocent citizens were treated in like manner.

More recently, in May 1986, my contribution to a peaceful demonstration by the students of Ahmadu Bello University Zaria in Nigeria resulted in a horrendous bloodbath in which was carved a painful personal tragedy.

It is a sad story. On what seemed to be a perfectly normal day, I was jolted from an early siesta by a staccato of machine gunfire. I scurried to the window, yanked it open and gazed across the southern wing of the campus. What I saw sent a paralyzing chill down my spine. No sooner had the students' action begun than the anti-riot squad of the police was drafted in. The sheer num-

bers of them staggered me. They were firing and killing students in such numbers that the scene seemed absolutely unreal.

I was already in a state of confusion and terror when all of a sudden I heard the heavy thuds of boots crashing up the stairs. Then the white-knuckle fear that gripped me turned into desperation and I swiftly jumped out of the window. This I did more by instinct than by calculation. As I hit the ground, I heard the sound of machine guns raining bullets into the room from which I had jumped.

Doubled over, I ran to my fiancée's hostel. The entire campus was in pandemonium. Practically nothing seemed real. I have never seen such a state of sustained gunfire before, punctuated only by the agonizing screams of the mortally wounded writhing in pain. Dead and dying bodies littered the pathways and pavements. The sight of so much blood made me feel dizzy. The main campus of the University had become a study in scarlet.

When I finally got to my fiancée's room, I was pretty close to fainting. First, I saw her shoulder protruding from behind a massive bookshelf. I vividly remember

calling out to her and saying, 'Now honey, come on, let's get the hell out of this nightmare'. Silence. Then I saw the blood. From under the bookshelf it glided towards me like a stream. I also became conscious enough to notice scores of bullet marks everywhere. She had tried to hide behind the shelf and had been shot from the opposite direction. I steeled myself and attempted moving the shelf but everything came crashing down – the books, the furniture, her corpse. She had been murdered in cold blood. As I looked down on her in helpless stupefaction, my legs began to wobble; lower and lower I sank until total darkness enveloped me....

Four hours later, the chilly cold of the tropical *hamartan* wind brought me wide awake. I was in jail.

The next morning, when I was taken to a dingy dining hall to queue for my breakfast, I marvelled at the galaxy of men and women around. It was like a who's who of Nigerian academics, lawyers and journalists, trade-union and human-rights activists, all incarcerated simply for expressing their conscientiously held beliefs. Every night I spent in jail, I heard people crying and con-

HUMAN RIGHTS

VIEW FROM THE SOUTH

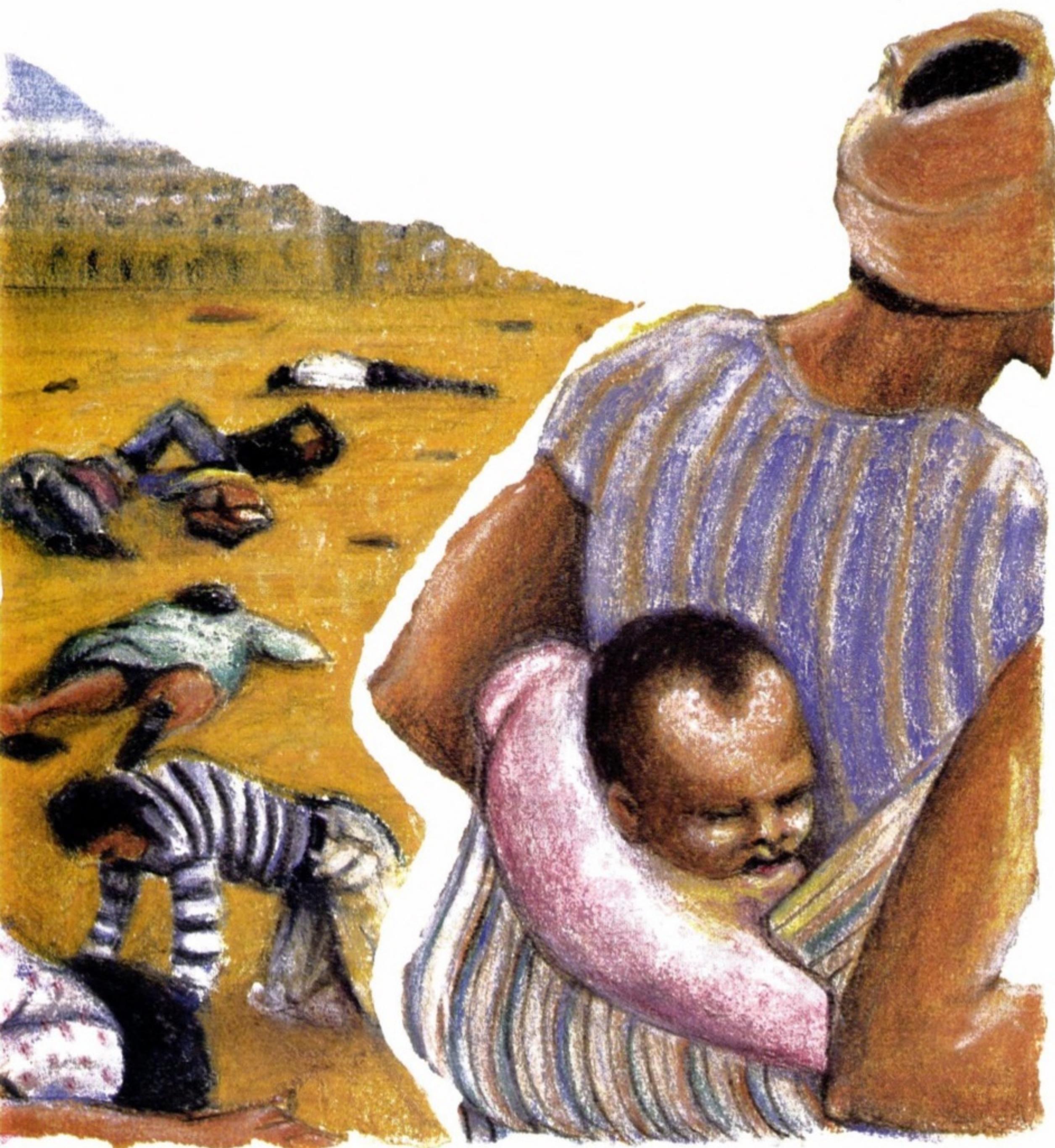


ILLUSTRATION: MIRIAM MCCURDY

fessing to all sorts of fictitious charges as burning cigarettes were extinguished on their bodies or their heads shaved with a piece of broken glass. For 23 nights this went on unabated. I was on the verge of insanity. It was all so macabre.

Human rights in my country are perverse and defy comprehension. I remember an incident in Anambra State in 1982. I was cycling along a major road when suddenly there was a blast of siren – most government functionaries are normally accompanied by motorcades and outriders. Traffic came to a halt while pedestrians scampered to a safe distance to avoid being horse-whipped as had become customary. It was the State Governor in transit. As they sped by, a police officer, standing on the back of a jeep undid his fly and started spraying urine on hapless citizens by the roadside. I saw a baby straddled over its mother's shoulders get a full blast on its face. I saw also its tongue stuck out as it licked the urine on its lips. Quite frankly, not just the revolting obscenity of the act but the wicked abuse of the child's innocence made me shed tears.

My letter about this incident was pub-

lished the next day by a local newspaper. The state government's reaction was volcanic. The publication was closed down and all its editorial team arrested and detained. I was forced into hiding.

I believe that human-rights abuses in whatever form and wherever they occur should be condemned by anyone who respects human dignity, regardless of race, colour or religion. The struggle for the protection of individual freedom should be waged through constructive partnership and co-operative action between human-rights activists and agencies the world over.

This is a view that obviously does not accord with the arguments of those nations who arrogate to themselves the dubious authority of championing what one can only describe as 'Third World brands of human rights'. China, Indonesia and Malaysia, amongst others, will argue at the World Conference in Vienna that it is little short of cultural imperialism for the North to impose its own notion of human rights on developing countries which have different traditions. Their argument is cheap political hysteria, typically self-interested and short-sighted. Their readiness to rebuff

any notion of civil and political rights is not surprising: they have a vested interest in protecting their own autocratic regimes through repression.

It is neither the culture nor the tradition of citizens of developing countries to have unelected, oppressive regimes imposed on them. A country with China's appalling human-rights record, with its scorn for democracy and contempt for the aspirations of the Tibetans, has no moral right to send delegates across the world talking about cultural rights. Being Indonesian or Malaysian doesn't somehow render you culturally or traditionally immune to torture or to the fear that pervades life under a brutal dictatorship.

Besides, there is a huge diversity of views in every developing country and government elites with no democratic mandate cannot claim to be representative of opinion in their own country – let alone of the Third World as a whole. The notion of human liberty is not merely a Western invention. All across the developing world, there is a burgeoning civil society exerting pressure for change on dictatorial regimes; there are courageous individual activists who campaign keenly for the social and economic rights of the poor despite great risk to themselves and their families.

The main point of many Third World governments at the World Conference on Human Rights will be that the North should be prepared to relinquish some of its power and wealth in the global economy. And so it should: I make no case for imperialism. But at the same time I'm wary about the argument that this should precede any human-rights improvements. The tragedy is that the more wealth and power the North relinquishes to the ruling elites of the South, the more wealth and power they will have to turn against their own people. I believe a conducive atmosphere of human freedom should first exist where voices of dissent are not brutally suppressed, where access to land by the urban and rural poor is possible, and where everyone – journalists, students, farmers – is free to hold differing opinions.

On the human-rights issue, if on no other, there should be one universal perspective. A cry of pain, at least, is a universal language which can be understood no matter what culture or tradition you come from.

When you've seen something, been something and felt something, you thoroughly UNDERSTAND – and I've seen it, been it and felt it. I, bitterly, understand; and so do millions of other citizens from the Third World who are routinely brutalized by their own governments. ■

Since he was forced into exile from Nigeria, **Emmanuel Onwe** has lived and worked in London, UK.



JAMES NACHTWEY / MAGNUM

New World Ordure

*The real human-rights villains are not jailers or executioners but rather Western governments who preside over the new economic order. So says **Mari Marcel Thekaekara**, who has to watch their victims die.*

As a 16-year-old Calcutta schoolgirl I wept for the Jewish people when I read Leon Uris's *Exodus*. Millions of people also died on the streets of Calcutta in 1943-44. But while Hitler's Holocaust is still vividly remembered, the Bengal Famine was and is barely mentioned – it was just an historical fact I tucked away in my mind for exams, even though millions of my own people had died so horrendously scarcely ten years before my birth.

Millions died begging for food in Bengal because Churchill's British Government diverted grain, making it impossible for any but the wealthy to buy what rice was left. These people were killed by Churchill's policies as surely as those Jewish Europeans were killed by Hitler's. What is it that makes the world agitate about one set of human rights and not another? Did the starving Bengalis not

have as much right to live as the Nazis' hapless victims?

Who decides that a hue and cry must be made about one kind of atrocity while another gets away unpublicized? Who sets the agenda which sees imprisonment and torture as human-rights violations while torture and death by starvation are not? And what gives some countries the right to become 'international' arbiters, ignoring the blood on their own hands?

The poor have never been a priority. Not now, not ever. History is in the process of repeating itself as the New World Order takes over. A new insidious form of colonialism is engulfing the world. It is more dangerous in its new manifestation. Earlier, the enemy was visible. Now the global

takeover by powerful Western nations has the consent and active participation of legitimate, elected governments in Third World countries.

The World Bank and the IMF dictate the terms through the process of *structural adjustment*, the newest obscenity in the development dictionary. Open your markets, they decree. Cut public spending. Remove subsidies on health and food. (If people die in the process, population growth will be tamed; an added bonus, that.) Produce more goods for export. Do all these things without fail or we will order sanctions against you.

India has just started down this road. We have opted for economic liberalization, privatization and free markets after four and a

half decades of Nehruvian socialism – in spite of the disastrous results evident in Asian, African and Latin American countries. So last month we had, for the first time in our history, a Budget which openly and unashamedly pandered to the rich. Refrigerators, cars and colour TV sets became cheaper. But ration rice, the absolute basic necessity in India, became more expensive. The mainstream press hailed the Budget. It was lauded as bold, imaginative, innovative. Yet it pandered to just 3 per cent of the population while offering the remaining 97 per cent just desolation and despair.

A top-of-the-line colour TV had its price slashed by 2,500 rupees (\$80) and advertisements now urge the rich to buy their second TV for the kids' bedroom. Meanwhile the price of a kilo of rice went up by 0.75 rupees, forcing the poorest to buy less rice for the family. An unskilled casual labourer in a tea estate here in the Nilgiris, for example, gets about 800 rupees (\$25) a month and spends over 700 of this on food alone. The person who can afford a colour TV is likely to earn over 10,000 rupees (\$320) a month and spend less than one-third of that on food.

So, proudly, even exultantly, the Indian Government has announced that in its new economic dispensation the poor will have to subsidize the rich. But the poor are already feeling the effects of economic liberalization and structural adjustment. Here in the Nilgiris Doctors Roopa and Deva, who have been running a community-health programme since 1987, are in despair because their growth-monitoring

charts are showing children under five who had just made it out of malnutrition slipping back because their parents are buying less food. After five years of health education, of trying to get people to eat *dal* (pulses, the only protein available to the poor) the price of *dal* has become prohibitive. 'We used to go to the shop and ask for a rupee worth of *dal*,' reports Kali, a tribal health worker. 'But now the shopkeeper gets angry and tells us to get lost.'

'Never mind *dal*,' she continues. 'Before we used to fill our stomachs with rice. Now you go to bed every night feeling hungry, wishing you had just that little bit more which would give you the satisfaction of a full stomach.' The indigenous people face a chronic protein deficiency anyway because their diet consists of bulk rice and little else. Now that they will have less rice as well, it will take its toll on their health, especially that of women and children.

We are already seeing children die because of poverty and malnutrition (see box). Measles, diarrhoea, a chest infection – minor ailments which a healthy child easily wards off can wipe out the malnourished child. But will our government accept moral responsibility for the deaths of these children as it slashes the price of TV sets and boosts that of rice? Or will the World Bank and the IMF who dictate the terms of structural adjustment own up to the blood on their hands?

Why are these starvation deaths not on the human-rights agenda? Why is there no pressure on the institutions which caused their deaths?



MAGGIE MURRAY / FORMAT

Rings on our fingers. Indian economic reform has helped the rich.

Instead the West decides which are the 'fundamental' human rights – and decides, for example, that individual freedom is what matters most, even if that means the freedom to exploit others.

By the same logic, so long as there is a free world, children in the Third World will continue to starve to death so that their counterparts in the West can consume up to 20 times more resources 'freely'. And in the New World Order coercion is permissible when it becomes necessary for the West to expand markets if it is to maintain its lifestyle.

There are signs of revolt, thank God. Amazingly, unexpectedly, farmers in India have been alerted to what the new GATT agreement threatens to do to them. Under the agreement farmers would no longer have the right to replant their own seeds if these had been patented by multinationals. The plan is diabolical and would cripple our entire agricultural sector.

Farmers' unions throughout this vast country have managed to impress on their members the urgency of the situation. The *godown* (warehouse) and office of a major multinational was ransacked by demonstrators in Bangalore. Of course violence of this sort by mere farmers will not be tolerated and the Government has threatened to take action. Only institutionalized violence is permissible.

The people will prevail. They always have, in the face of tremendous odds. But a bit of international pressure helps. It's time for people who care about human rights to adopt a new cause: the Third World person's right to exist. Our people are under fire from global terrorism of a terminal new order. Many have already been wiped off the face of the earth.

Mari Marcel Thekaekara has spent the last ten years working with indigenous people in the hills of the Indian state of Tamil Nadu.

An ordinary death

MANBI, a 15-year-old Kattunaicken tribal girl, died of anaemia. No, not leukaemia, *anaemia*. She was not ill. She suffered from no incurable disease. Her death was solely due to lack of decent food. She didn't need a fancy diet. Just *dal* (pulses) and *sag* (greens) could have saved her.

Doctors Roopa and Narayanan Devadasan received a phone call from their health worker in the Nilgiris Chembakolly forest village where Manbi lived. The girl seemed serious, said the call. Their jeep rushed to pick up the patient. It took a couple of hours to get her to our makeshift clinic. Roopa took one look at her and said 'Cross match. Find her blood group. She needs a donor immediately.' They took a blood sample. The blood when it came was like water into which a drop of red ink had been mixed. Her haemoglobin was less than one gram per 100 millilitre (Indian women normally have ten grams).

As Roopa tried to find her blood group the girl's mother announced 'it's too late, *amma*, she's gone already'. The family took a glass of tea from the kitchen and poured a few drops into the dead girl's mouth. Ritual observed, they carried her back to the jeep.

Hardly 15 minutes had elapsed between her arrival and her death.

In the outer office, a typewriter clattered. Everything had happened so fast. The others had not yet registered that we'd had a death in the next room. The news filtered out and everyone came to help. Someone brought a mat. We arranged her body comfortably on the jeep. Stupidly, futilely. But it gave us something to do. Roopa was in shock; the rest of us scarcely better. The jeep moved off to return her to her forest home.

Roopa went into her office. We congregated around her wordlessly. She was sobbing uncontrollably. 'We've worked here for so many years,' she said, 'and now a death like this. Is there any point in continuing?' All of us had been through similar crises and we knew it would pass. The struggle has to go on. But after eight years in the Nilgiris I still cannot accept the utterly tragic, preventable deaths which the average tribal person accepts as her lot.

Do the Manbis of this world not have a right to live? Is it not time for this human-rights violation to get as much publicity as that of the political prisoner who dies with a bullet in her back?

MMT

Beyond these castle walls

THERE is no turning back. We've left everything and all we want is a piece of land without war, a little piece of freedom and perhaps a taste of democracy.'

This Bosnian refugee was stranded on the Austrian/Slovenian border having been denied a visa to enter Britain. She had just run up against the wall which is being erected around Fortress Europe – and which rich countries the world over are building to protect their own privilege against what they see as a possible tidal wave of refugees. They are doing this in flagrant disregard for their own obligations under international law – specifically the legally binding 1951 UN Convention on Refugees. And while President Clinton's policy of turning back boatloads of desperate Haitians seeking refuge in the US from military dictatorship hits more headlines, the most glaring example of this new attitude to asylum-seekers is in the European Community (EC), because there the policy has been arrived at through carefully co-ordinated strategy (or 'policy harmonization'). If these European countries are flouting international law, it is not through bureaucratic error – it is through deliberate policy.

They now insist that all applicants for asylum within the EC must carry valid passports and visas – and are even fining airlines to the tune of \$3,000 for each passenger they carry in who does not hold them. Not only does this turn airline personnel into immigration officers, but the policy screens out the very people who most need asylum. How on earth could an Iraqi escaping from Saddam Hussein's brutal regime apply for a passport from the authorities or approach an embassy for a visa? Only those who can afford forged documents on the black market have even a ghost of a chance of getting to Europe.

Even those who make it to a European airport are often treated brutally. Take this young Eritrean woman, a former political prisoner in Mengistu's Ethiopia, who tried with her brother to apply for asylum at London's Heathrow:

'The official considered our passports. She began shouting at us, saying "how can you come in this way without proper documents – you will be sent back to Addis Ababa". When she said this we were so distressed that we fell on our knees, weeping and pleading. The woman laughed at us – she thought it was funny that we were on our hands and knees. She said "We don't want Ethiopians; there are too many". They took my brother by his legs and dragged him along the ground. Then the woman took me by the wrists and pushed me onto the plane.'

Britain has been prominent among those Western governments which have stressed that refugees should stay in their region of origin rather than be accepted into the rich world: thus impoverished Malawi has hosted a million refugees from the fighting in Mozambique, and Pakistan three million from Afghanistan.

Yet Britain has been notably reticent in accepting responsibility for its own region in the biggest refugee crisis to befall Europe since the Second World War – that in the former Yugoslavia. While Germany, for example, has accepted more than 250,000 former Yugoslavians, Britain's response to the crisis was, in November 1992, to impose a visa requirement on Bosnians seeking asylum. Needless to say, it is virtually impossible to get a visa in Bosnia – that is precisely why the requirement was imposed. At least Britain is consistent: it demanded visas from Germans and Austrians trying to flee the Nazis in the 1930s.

As a response to an international crisis this is nothing less than outrageous. If the number of displaced people in the world is swelling as they are forced to run from civil war, oppression or plain poverty, the response should not be to reinforce the walls of the rich-

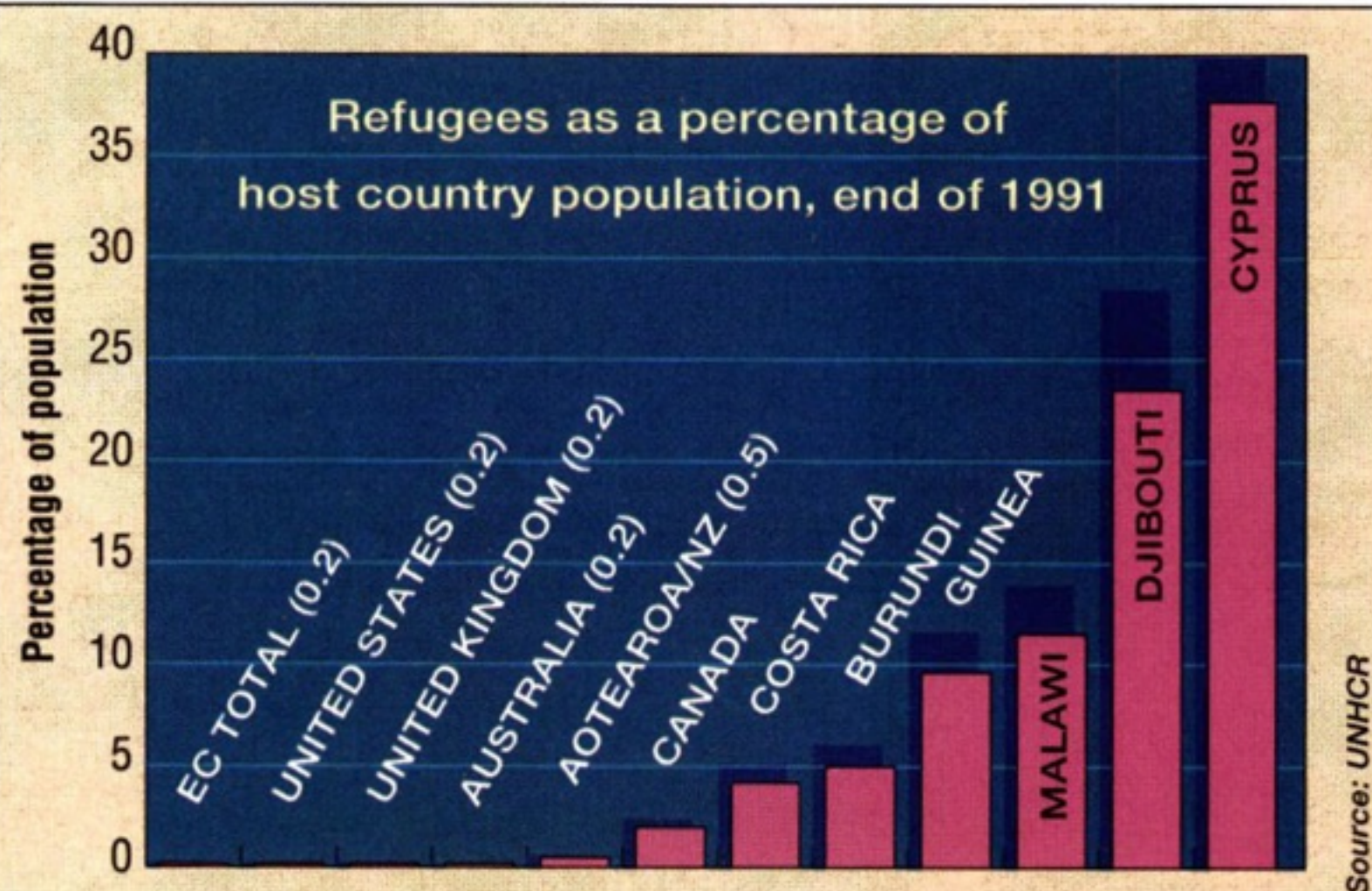
world fortress. It is high time the international community examined the real villains of the piece, not the unfortunate victims.

Jan Shaw is Refugees Officer with Amnesty International British Section.

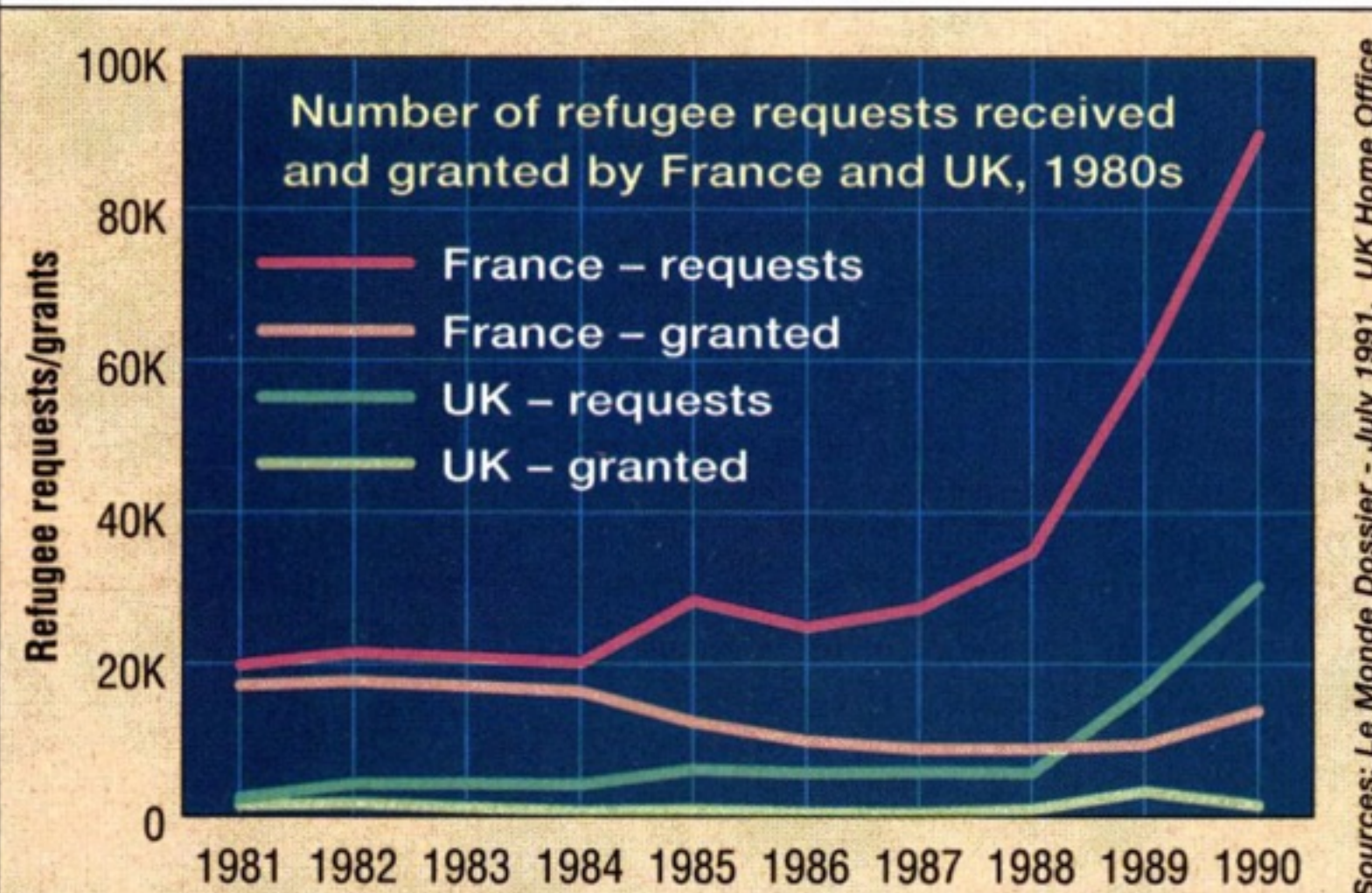


Burdened and bereft: refugees in Bloké, Slovenia.

RELATIVE GENEROSITY



EUROPE CLOSES ITS DOORS





ANDRÉE KAISER / REX FEATURES

Rape: weapon of war

These Bosnian Muslim women agreed to be photographed so that 'the world knows the truth'. They were systematically raped by Serbian militia in a Tuzla refugee camp.

The traditional human-rights image is of a male prisoner of conscience. Yet the Serbian rape camps in Bosnia show that it's often women who suffer most.

Angela Robson reports.

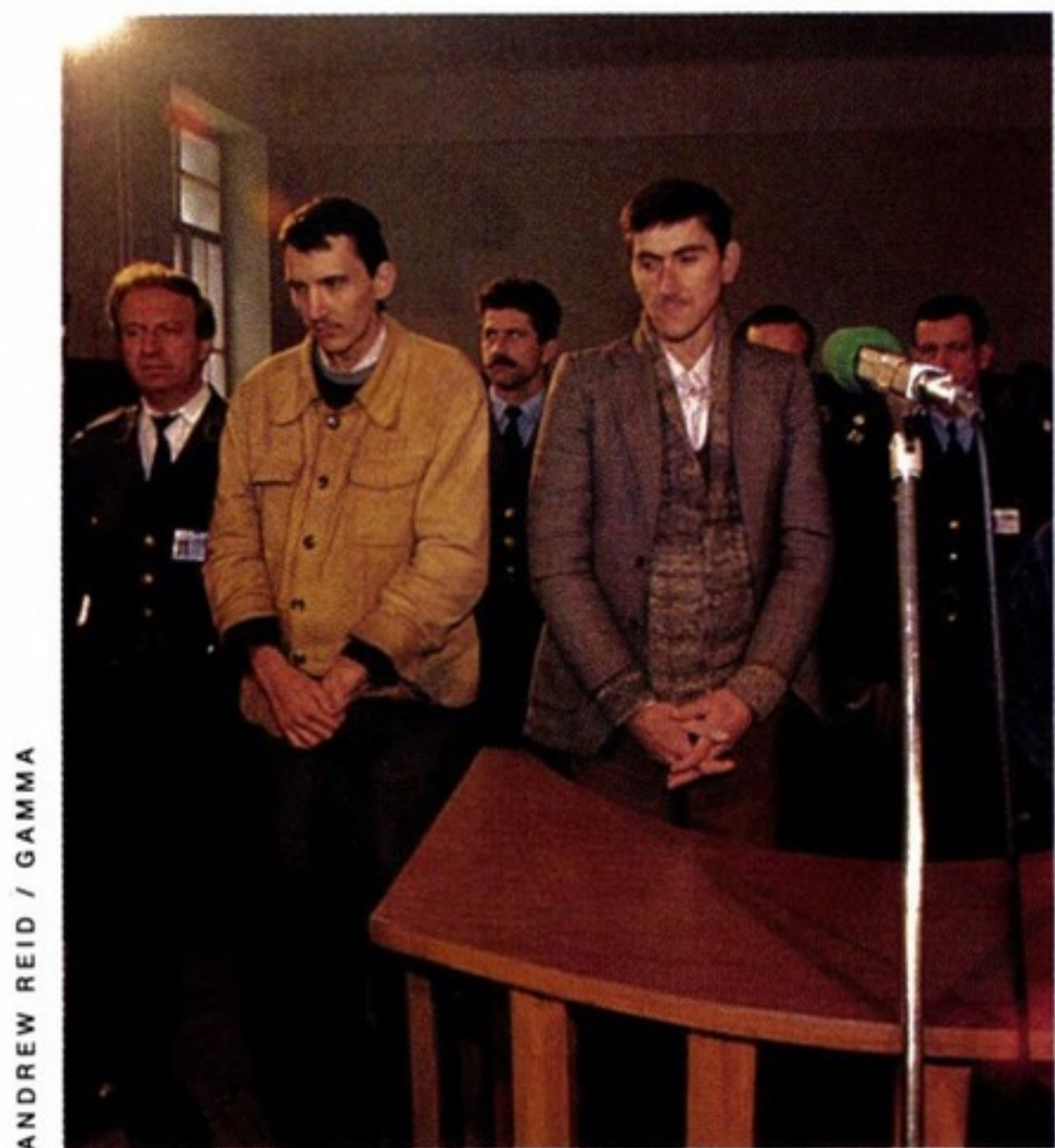
THE black-and-white poster near the Sarajevo courtroom said it all: 'Borislav Herak – War Criminal'. Inside, the 22-year-old former textile worker stood charged with 32 murders and 16 rapes, including the murder of 12 of his 16 rape victims. The date was Friday, 12 March 1993 and Herak was the first Serb to be put on trial for war crimes in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

No-one will ever know the exact number of women and girls raped during the

conflict in former Yugoslavia. But Herak's accounts of his forced participation in rapes of Bosnian Muslim women – his commander had told him it was 'good for morale' – accord with evidence recounted to human-rights observers and journalists throughout the region. Though all figures must be treated with caution in a war so plagued by propaganda, these witnesses tell of the organized and systematic rape of at least 20,000 women and girls by the Serbian military and the murder of many of the vic-

tims. Muslim and Croatian – as well as some Serbian – women are being raped in their homes, in schools, police stations and camps all over the country.

The sexual abuse of women in war is nothing new. Rape has long been tolerated as one of the spoils of war, an inevitable feature of military conflict like pillage and looting. What is new about the situation in Bosnia is the attention it is receiving – and the recognition that it is being used as a deliberate military tactic to speed up the process of 'ethnic cleansing'. According to a recent report by European Community investigators, rapes are being committed in 'particularly sadistic ways to inflict maximum humiliation on victims, their families, and on the whole community'.¹ In many cases the intention is 'deliberately to make women pregnant and to detain them until



The one who didn't get away: Borislav Herak (above right) on trial for rape and murder in Sarajevo.

pregnancy is far enough advanced to make termination impossible'. Women and girls aged anything between 6 and 70 are being held in camps throughout the country and raped repeatedly by gangs of soldiers. Often brothers or fathers of these women are forced to rape them as well. If they refuse, they are killed.

For 28-year-old Senka, the horror began late one night in April 1992 when 10 Chetniks (Serbs) barged into her apartment in Gorazde as she was sitting talking to some friends. 'At the moment they entered,' she recounts, 'they began to curse our "Muslim mothers", saying "You sent your husbands to fight but you will see, we will do to you everything we know and we will take you to concentration camps after that".'

She and another young woman were dragged to a bedroom and repeatedly raped: 'They ripped off all my clothes till I was naked. Two of the Chetniks held me and two of them had intercourse with me. After those two had raped me, the others did the same. My friend was raped in the same room by the same soldiers. I recognized two of the Chetniks as my former neighbours from Gorazde.'

In the morning at about three o'clock, Senka came to her senses. She heard noises from the sitting room and realized that the soldiers were raping her other friends. She ran into the bathroom and managed to escape through the window. Shortly after the rape she realized she was pregnant and had to go to Sarajevo for an abortion. She is now living in a hostel for refugees there.

'Any rape is monstrously unacceptable,' says Semra Turkovic, who works with survivors of rape in Zagreb. 'But what is happening at this very moment in these rape/death camps is even more horrific. This can only be considered as genocide.'

She believes that the number of women raped in Bosnia exceeds even the highest estimates recorded by human-rights investigators. 'Sometimes women can never bring themselves to admit what has happened and so the crime is never reported. They feel humiliated and defiled. Their lives have been completely shattered.'

To Mubera Zdravovic, who is developing a programme of assistance in Zagreb for women left pregnant by rape, the torment endured by the thought of giving birth to a child of mass rape is often too much to bear. 'The foetus growing inside the woman is a living reminder of the horror she has suffered, like a wound that keeps on growing.' Speaking of the Pope's recent warning to these women that they must not seek abortions, but learn to 'accept the enemy into them', she has only quiet disbelief. 'These children have been conceived out of revenge, not love,' she asserts. 'How can any woman or girl forgive a rapist that?'

Amnesty International has no firm evidence on whether rape is being used as a strategic weapon but is clear that local leaders must have condoned it.² Catherine MacKinnon, Professor of Law at the University of Michigan, claims that rape is being used to help make Bosnia a Serbian state by implanting Serb babies in Muslim mothers. The international community, she says, is refusing to face up to the true nature of the conflict there – that this is not just a campaign of Serbia against non-Serbia but is a form of genocide directed specifically against women. 'The fact that these rapes are part of an ethnic war of aggression being represented as a civil war means that Muslim and Croatian women are facing twice as many rapists with twice as many excuses and two layers of impunity serving to justify the rapes. This is ethnic rape by official policy of war – rape as ethnic liquidation.'³

Yet these violations are not unique to Bosnia. In March this year Nobel Peace Prize winners Mairead Maguire and Betty Williams testified to the UN Human Rights Commission about the repeated rape of Karen women by government soldiers in Burma. One young Karen writes of the women she represents, who have been forced to act as slaves to government troops, carrying heavy materials on daytime marches. And during the night: 'every woman must confront the same problem. My ladies have been raped brutally by at least eight soldiers of the SLORC (the ruling junta) every night. Some women couldn't continue to walk because of the hurtful raping and torture so they were shot and died. Those who were able to walk have to face the same thing every day and night until they've been raped to death.' She adds with poignant understatement:

'These are abuses of their human rights.'⁴

To Zainab Jama, the Somali writer and former BBC broadcaster, the silence surrounding such violence is a measure of its effectiveness. Her research on her own country indicates that acts of unspeakable brutality are being carried out against women in the civil war raging there. 'Who knows how many victims of rape there are in Somalia? No-one can estimate the number though one can speak in terms of many thousands. All we do know is that the victims of war rape are being ignored in Somalia. The West simply does not wish to know what is happening there.'

Rape is unlawful in both international conflicts and civil war. But, according to Amnesty International, many governments do not uphold these norms and are often complacent in the face of such abuses. On a visit to Peru's Ayacucho department in 1986, for example, Amnesty was told by legal officers that rape by government troops conducting counter-insurgency operations 'was to be expected' and that prosecutions for such assaults were unlikely to happen. Women raped by soldiers in emergency zones were warned not to report it lest they suffer reprisals.

What can be done to protect women from such violations? According to Françoise Hampson, lecturer in international law at the UK's Essex University, what is lacking is the will to prosecute. 'The act, rape, must be punished. Nothing should be allowed to jeopardize the prosecution of those alleged to have committed rape.'

To Catherine MacKinnon the issue goes even deeper than this. 'Human-rights principles are based on experience, but the experiences have not been those of women,' she says. 'What most often happens to women escapes the human-rights net. Whether in war or in peacetime, at home or abroad, in private or in public, by our side or by the other side, man's inhumanity to woman is ignored.'

Governments must face up to the fact that rape in war can no longer be tolerated. Women's groups from all over the world are campaigning vigorously for the prosecution of rape as a war crime and, as the World Conference approaches, petitioning the UN to recognize women's rights as human rights. If human rights are to be universally respected and protected, they say, then they must apply to the lives of over half the human race – women. ■

Angela Robson is a London-based freelance journalist specializing in human-rights issues.

1 *The Warburton Report*, European Community 1993. 2 *Bosnia Herzegovina, Rape & Sexual Abuse by Armed Forces*, Amnesty International Jan 1993. 3 Catherine MacKinnon, 'Crimes of War, Crimes of Peace', to appear in *Of Human Rights* (Basic Books 1993). 4 Account supplied by Women's Education for Advancement and Empowerment, PO Box 58, Chiang Mai, Thailand.

The two-faced West

Governments in the rich world are keen to export the notion of civil and political rights. But this cause is weakened by their past hypocrisy in dealing with the human-rights records of their allies — and their opponents.

NICARAGUA (1980s)

Human-rights record

The Sandinista regime's punishment of people assisting the *contra* guerillas causes some concern, as does the harassment of opposition-party and trade-union members. Around 2,500 prisoners are held for offences committed under the Somoza dictatorship. The press is subject to some censorship.

Treatment of Miskito Indians is brutal at first but improves later.

Western response

The US trains and finances the *contra* rebels, who in 1986 alone receive \$100 million in military aid. Covert funding for them is revealed in the Irangate scandal. Human-rights abuses by *contras* are common. The US also strangles Nicaragua's economy by a trade-and-aid blockade. In 1990, tired of war and hardship, Nicaraguans vote in an opposition coalition but the US refuses to renew aid, claiming the new government is still too far left.

EL SALVADOR (1980s)

Human-rights record

Between 1979 and 1985 45,000 unarmed civilians are murdered by government troops and right-wing death squads operating under military control. The late 1980s are only slightly less grim: death squads continue to operate; torture and arbitrary arrest remain routine. The guilt of the military and the Government is confirmed in a UN report published in March 1993.

Western response

In the 1980s the US gives six billion dollars in aid to the Salvadoran Government. US advisers train the military in the latest counter-insurgency techniques and suggest ways for the Government to improve its image abroad. The Reagan Administration withholds information from US Congress about the worst human-rights abuses.

ANGOLA (1974 – present)

Human-rights record

The Marxist MPLA Government allows no opposition parties through the 1970s and 1980s; it fights a civil war against foreign-backed UNITA guerillas. Government opponents are detained without trial for long periods and prisoners are tortured. But the 1990s sees a sea change: 3,000 political prisoners are released in 1990, a multi-party system and human-rights guarantees introduced in 1991 and free elections held in 1992. The Government wins the election fairly but UNITA disregards the result and renews the civil war.

Western response

The US and South Africa support UNITA from independence in 1974 – joint CIA-South African forces try to capture the capital but are routed by the MPLA's Cuban allies. Further CIA involvement in Angola is outlawed, though in 1986 the Reagan Administration is found to be channeling \$15 million of covert aid for UNITA through Zaire. Western countries, led by the US, maintain a trade-and-aid embargo. The US embargo remains in place despite the free elections: President Clinton has this 'under review'.

ZAIRE (1965 – present)

Human-rights record

Former army commander Mobutu Sese Seko rules Zaire with an iron fist from 1965. Torture, detention without trial and imprisonment of political opponents prevail throughout his rule. In 1990 Mobutu promises free elections but later changes his mind, wishing 'to preserve his authority without exposing himself to criticism'. Student protests calling for his resignation are brutally put down, with at least 100 students murdered. Today Mobutu still faces major popular uprisings but refuses to relinquish power.

Western response

From 1975 Mobutu is the West's staunchest ally in the region and Zaire is the biggest recipient of US aid in sub-Saharan Africa. In 1979 Mobutu is saved from a major rebel offensive by French and Belgian paratroopers, with US logistical support. In 1993 the mounting popular pressure on Mobutu finally leads Western powers to take a tougher line: France, Belgium and the US decide they can no longer sustain him and press him to resign.

IRAQ (August 1990 – present)

Human-rights record

Since the Gulf War Saddam's regime has re-asserted its complete control over society. Virtually every important liberty is denied the Iraqi people. No political dissent, even of the mildest kind, is possible and fear of the *mukhabarat*, the ubiquitous secret police, pervades everyday life. Thousands of political prisoners are detained without charge and torture is still routine.

Western response

Following the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait the UN imposes a total economic and military blockade and a US-led alliance then bombs the major cities and routs Iraqi troops. The blockade is still in place in 1993, justified partly by the human-rights abuses of the Saddam Hussein regime. The destruction of Iraq's electricity, health-care, water and food-supply systems has caused hunger, disease and suffering for millions of ordinary people. Absolute poverty levels have soared and child mortality rates are four times what they were before the War.

IRAQ (1979 – August 1990)

Human-rights record

US State Department Report, Feb 1990: 'Human rights, as such, are not recognized in Iraq. As our report details, the ordinary Iraqi citizen knows no personal security against government violence. Disappearances, followed by secret executions, appear to be common... Torture is routine, for security offenses and ordinary crimes alike, and confessions extracted under torture are admissible in court... The regime is ruthless in its efforts to maintain absolute control over the population.'

Western response

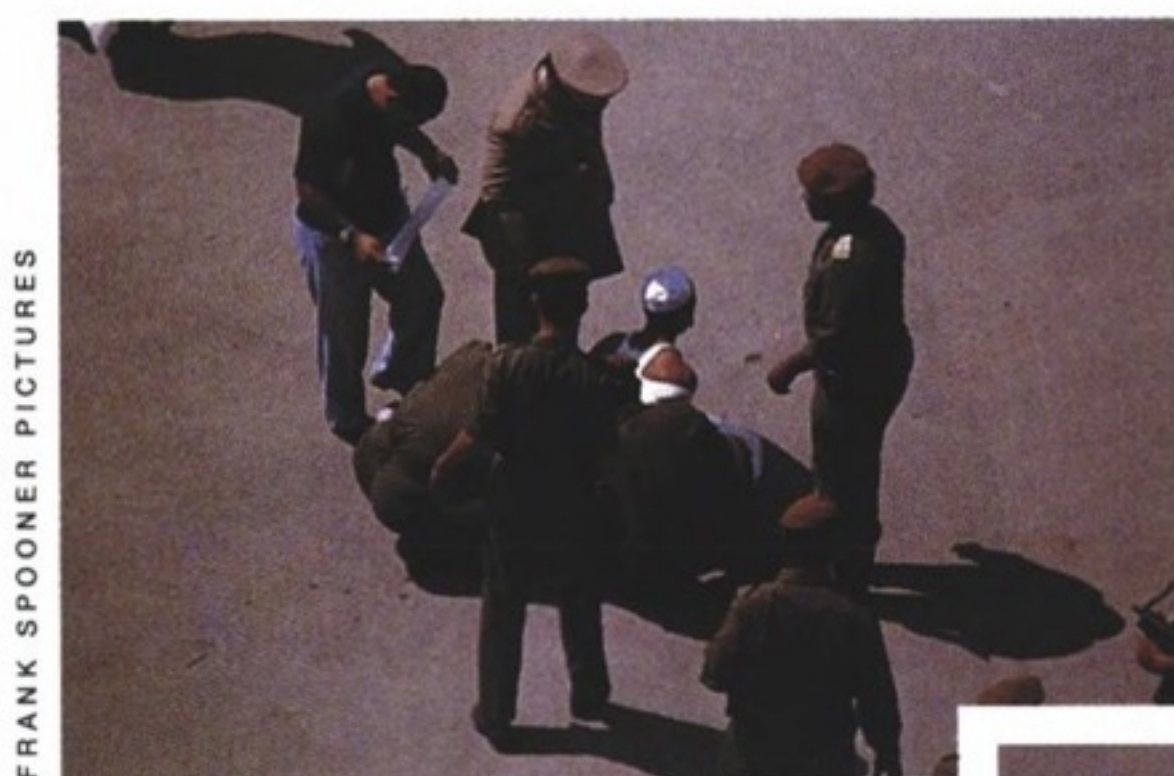
The West supports Saddam Hussein in his war with fundamentalist Iran between 1980 and 1988. The US shares CIA and Pentagon intelligence with Iraq and in 1987 US ships confront Iran directly. Other Western powers are outraged by the massacre of Kurds with chemical weapons. But the US remains aloof, exporting advanced technology with possible military use. On 1 August 1990, the day before Iraq invades Kuwait, the US approves the sale of \$695 million worth of advanced data transmission devices.



Sources: Amnesty International annual reports; Human Rights Watch World Report 1990; Third World Guide 93-94.

Last rights

The Vatican has endorsed it; Bill Clinton is using it to prove he is 'tough'. Is the death penalty making a comeback? Brian Dooley sifts the evidence.



FRANK SPOONER PICTURES

A public beheading in Saudi Arabia, photographed secretly. People are beheaded in Saudi Arabia for murder, drug-trafficking, kidnapping and sexual offences – for example, between May and December 1991 29 men died in this way.



GUESS which three countries execute the most juvenile offenders. Iran and Iraq will surprise nobody by their inclusion on this list – but the third guilty party is the US.

Throughout the World Conference on Human Rights, Bill Clinton's State Department will be putting pressure on selected countries to democratize, liberalize and energize their efforts towards open and free government. But one area of human rights where they will certainly not be able to exert any pressure is the death penalty, since the US is killing its own citizens at an accelerated rate. Last year saw a bumper execution total of 31.

It's far easier for developing nations to retain or introduce the death penalty if self-proclaimed guardians of human rights like the US still practise it.¹ And if developing democracies search for moral justifications beyond the US example, they could follow the lead set by the Vatican at the end of 1992. The Catholic Church's new Universal Catechism, which took five years of research and 11 separate drafts, declares that the death penalty 'is permissible'.

Informed commentary suggests that the invisible hand of the US may have been involved at some stage here too. The Catholic Church relies heavily on funding from American Catholics, its largest income base, and may have considered it risky to denounce US law.

The Vatican endorsement is regarded as

a serious setback by some anti-death-penalty campaigners. They point out that in countries with a sizable Catholic population, the moral argument against state executions will be severely weakened. Since the pronouncement, pro-death-penalty politicians have come close to reintroducing the punishment in El Salvador, have succeeded in bringing it back to the Philippines and are currently battling to restore it in Peru.

The real battle, though, is to persuade a few key countries to exclude the punishment completely from their statutes in the hope of creating a domino effect. Britain is a vital target. While the death penalty is no longer allowed in the UK for ordinary offences, it is still on the statute books for treason. At the moment the final appeal for prisoners sentenced to death in Mauritius, Belize, Brunei, The Gambia, Jamaica and more than a dozen other countries in the Caribbean, is the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council (an arcane body of former and current politicians which reports to the Queen) in London. It would be very difficult for this body to recommend that executions be carried out if the British Government had banned it for all offences

and denounced it as an absolutely inappropriate sentence.

Similarly, when Prime Minister John Major visited Beijing in August 1991, he raised the cases of dozens of political prisoners with the Chinese authorities but was in no position to seize the moral high ground on state executions – yet more people are executed in China every year than were killed in Beijing during the Tiananmen Square Massacre of 1989. Hard statistics are difficult to find, as official figures are classified state secrets, but it is believed that about 20,000 people are put to death every year – though, surprisingly enough, China is not among those countries which execute juvenile offenders.

HUMAN RIGHTS

THE DEATH PENALTY

One-third of all criminal offences in Chinese law carry the death penalty. Defendants are not presumed innocent and many prisoners sentenced to death are publicly displayed at mass sentencing rallies which take place at football grounds before they are executed, with rally tickets available in advance from selected Hong Kong outlets. Condemned prisoners are then put on open lorries, and driven straight from the rally to the execution grounds with placards around their necks which announce their crimes. Then they are shot.

Shooting also remains an option for two states in the US, although most rely on more traditional methods like a lethal injection, a gas chamber or an electric chair. The chances of a condemned prisoner actually being executed in the US depend upon a complicated equation which includes the race and sex of the prisoner and his/her victim, the state s/he is convicted in, and a myriad of other political variables – if it's an election year, if 'crime' is a local issue, if the international community makes a strong representation for clemency, etc.

No case illustrates the complexity of the forces involved in an execution better than that of Ricky Ray Rector of Arkansas.² In 1981, Rector killed two men, the second a police officer. Immediately after, he shot himself through the left temple.

The bullet blasted away three inches from the front of his brain, and lodged in the right side of his head, just above his ear. Previously disturbed, Rector's understanding was now reduced to that of a small child. His IQ hovered between 63 and 70. A prison psychologist who examined Rector soon after noted that he

with alligators and chickens). Rector had no real grasp of what the sentence meant. His attorney stressed that 'For Ricky, "I'm going to die"... had about the same meaning as "I'm going to the dentist."'.

Under other circumstances, given a sympathetic governor, Rector's chances of survival would have been good. He was clearly not the same human being who had shot the two men dead. Unluckily for Rector, however, his governor was running for president and, as the execution date approached, was going through a bad spell.

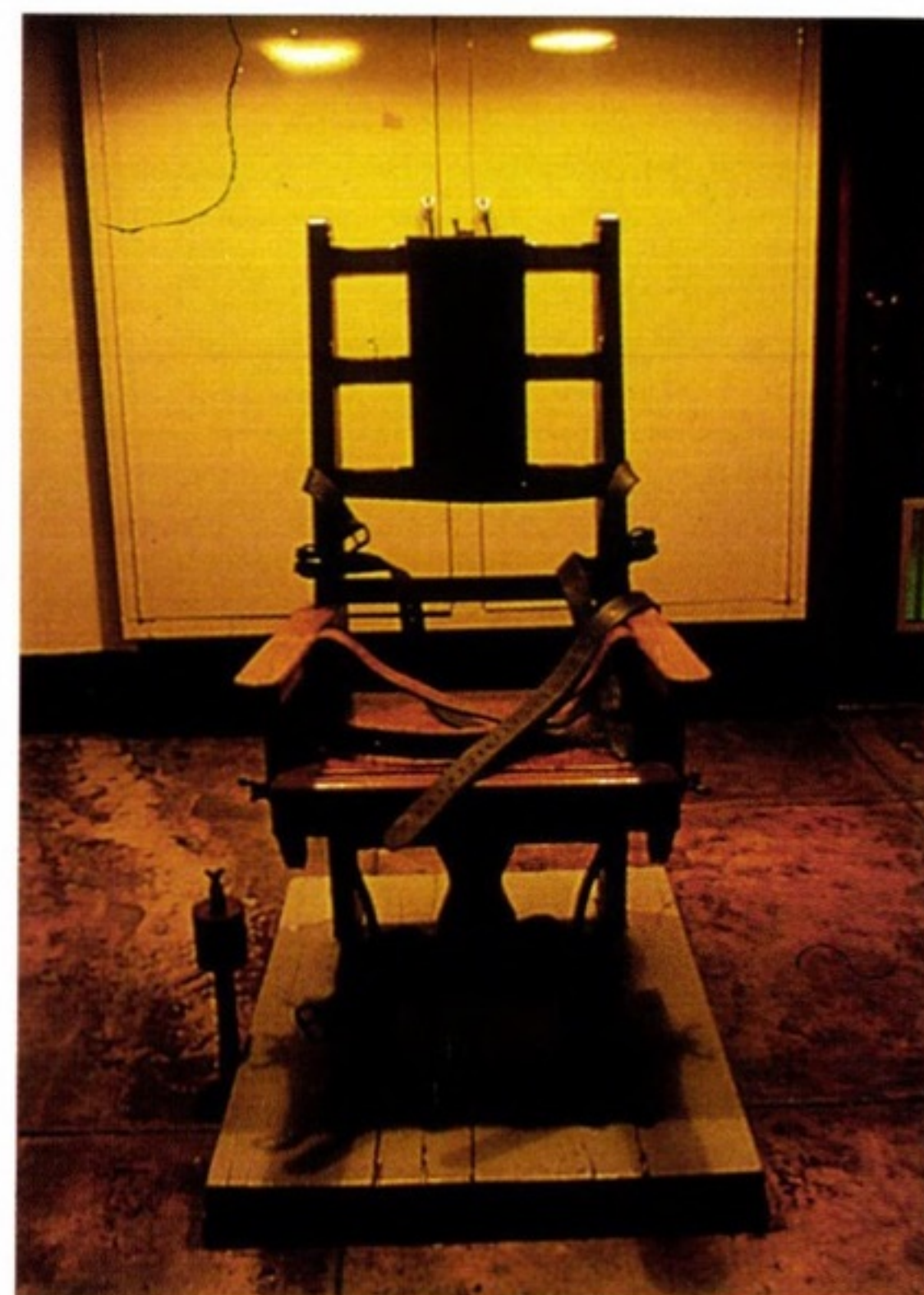
In January 1991, Bill Clinton was campaigning in the conservative state of New Hampshire. His early momentum had been checked by allegations of an affair with Gennifer Flowers and his chances in the primary were slipping away. Clinton's fingers had been burnt on the crime issue once before. Back in 1979 he had released a 73-year-old mortally-ill murderer who had killed again before dying. Clinton had lost the following year's election. After that he reversed his position on the death penalty and won back the governorship.

Sadly for Rector, the execution became a test of Clinton's nerve. Would he allow the execution of a man with severe brain damage to take place? Clinton left the campaign trail and flew back to Arkansas to ensure that the punishment went ahead as scheduled.

Rector spent his last hours as he had spent the previous ten years – alternately skipping, barking, laughing and howling. He left the dessert of his final meal, believing he could eat it when he returned from the execution chamber.

As he lay in the trolley, waiting for the needle to be inserted into his arm and the lethal injection to take its course, a group of witnesses gathered outside the chamber: orange plastic chairs were provided for them together with sick bags and a nurse in case the execution proved too much for them. The medical crew struggled for an hour to find a vein which could cope with the injection, but Rector's veins were too thin and kept collapsing. Eventually they were forced to slash his arm to gain access. Finally, 19 minutes after they began pumping the poison into his arm, Rector died.

Aides close to Clinton stress how difficult the decision was for him, and describe how his voice appeared choked during the evening of the execution. A personal appeal from Jesse Jackson was refused. According to Jackson, Clinton said 'he'd been researching various ways to get



WRIGHT-LIAISON / GAMMA

The Chair: the ultimate symbol of execution US-style.

around it, but it just couldn't be done... Said he was praying about it, though.'

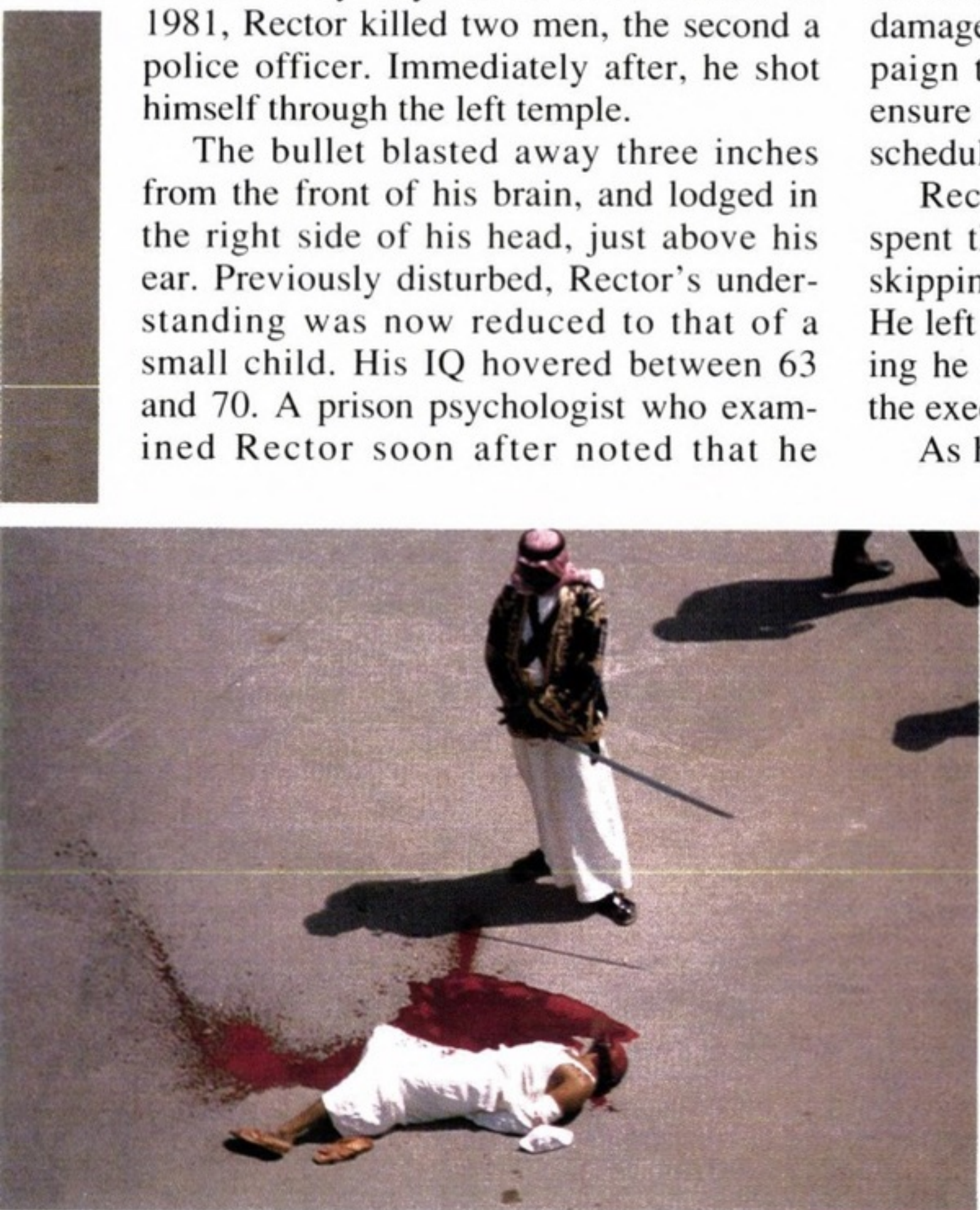
The lottery of the process was underlined a year later, when Clinton was sworn in as President. Arkansas had to appoint a temporary governor to replace him, and Jerry Jewell from the state legislature became Acting Governor for a week. During that week four death-penalty cases passed across his desk. All four were saved from execution and Jewell expressed regret that he wasn't able to spare more. If Rector's case had come up in January of 1993 instead of 1992, his chances of survival would have been much greater.

US execution dates which arise during the Vienna Conference are likely to be given huge publicity and will provide much of the focus for campaigners against the death penalty worldwide. The US will probably not be sensitive enough to delay the executions until after the Conference: last December, an execution was carried out in Virginia during the state's official Human Rights Week.

The tide towards worldwide abolition is so far no more than a trickle – on average two countries a year do away with the death penalty – dammed up by the insistence of a few key countries on retaining the punishment. Until those governments breach the logjam, state executions are here to stay.

Brian Dooley works in the press office of Amnesty International British Section.

¹ USA: *Death Penalty and Juvenile Offenders*, Amnesty International 1991. ² USA: *Death Penalty Developments in 1992*, Amnesty International.



'seemed unable to grasp the concept of past or future' and had told several people he had been hospitalized because of a wound to his leg.

When his death sentence was pronounced, Rector's first reaction was to inquire if he would get a television in his cell (a cell which he believed was swarming

CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS

The best...

The 10 countries with the best record on civil and political rights (1991)

1. Finland	99%
2. Aotearoa/NZ	98%
Denmark	98%
Germany	98%
Netherlands	98%
6. Czechoslovakia	97%
Hungary	97%
Norway	97%
9. Belgium	96%
Switzerland	96%
12. Canada	94%; 15. UK 93%;
17. Australia	91%; 18. US 90%.



... and the worst

The 10 countries with the worst records on civil and political rights (1991)

1. Burma	17%
Iraq	17%
3. Sudan	18%
4. North Korea	20%
5. China	21%
6. Iran	22%
7. Libya	24%
8. Angola	27%
9. Afghanistan	28%
10. Saudi Arabia	29%

Readers in **Aotearoa/New Zealand** will be surprised to learn that they live in such a paradise given the inroads made into their rights since the advent of the Bolger Government: this rating derives from the Labour Administration which preceded it. In general the rich countries of the North predominate because their wealth makes it easier for them to guarantee basic freedoms of expression and movement. Newly liberated **Czechoslovakia** and **Hungary** have therefore gained remarkably high ratings and the achievements of developing countries **Costa Rica** and **Uruguay** in gaining a 90% rating are, to say the least, greater than the US's in reaching the same percentage.

Among the world's worst offenders, **Burma's** military rulers held an election in 1990 but when the opposition National League for Democracy (NLD) won an overwhelming majority simply ignored the result and clamped down even harder. Torture and extrajudicial executions are regularly reported. Saddam Hussein's regime in **Iraq** needs no introduction.

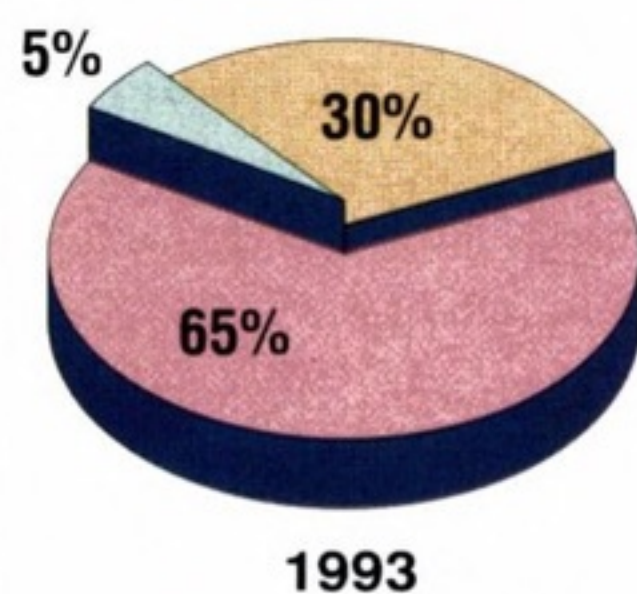
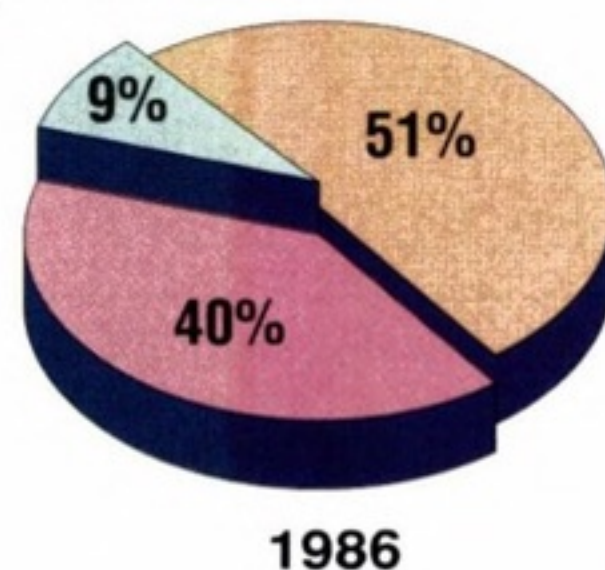
In **Sudan** the Islamic fundamentalist government's offensive against the Christian minority in the south has led to systematic human-rights abuse as well as a major famine.

PROGRESS

Over the five-year period from 1986 to 1991 the average human-rights rating went up from 55% to 62%. There were similar improvements in the availability of multiparty political systems.

Percentage of world's population living under multiparty, one-party or military systems.

- Military
- One-party
- Multiparty



If China were to change, the proportion of people living under multiparty systems would rise to 86%. Handle these statistics with care, though, since the multi-party category includes countries like Mexico and Russia, which have many parties but fall well short of normal democratic standards.

STATE OF THE WORLD'S HUMAN RIGHTS

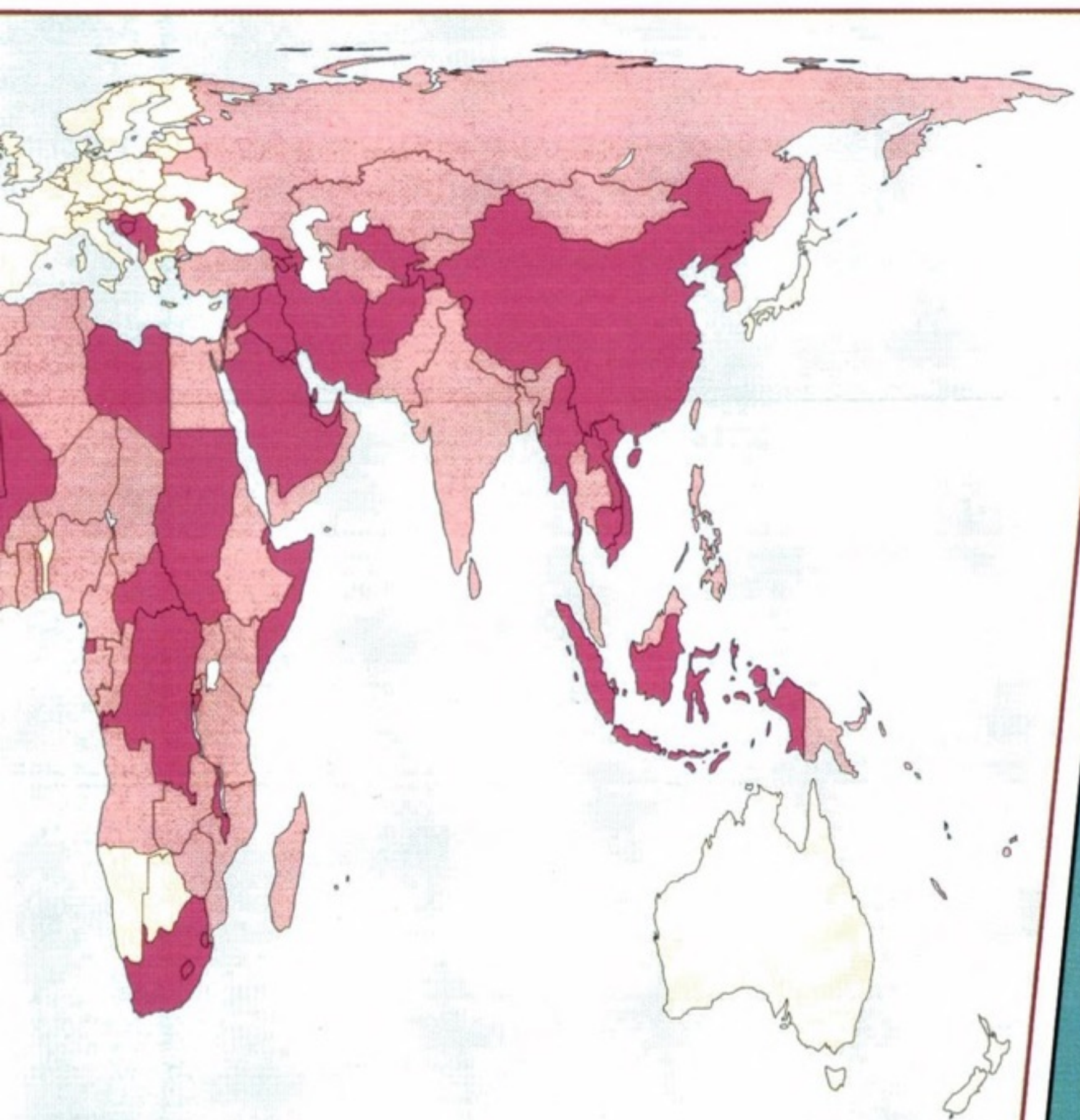
- Most human rights respected
- Many human rights denied
- Most human rights denied

This map represents the state of the world's human rights in the

This facts spread depicts two different worlds; me political freedoms and on the other in terms of human style about which human right must come first but it the poorest countries tend to

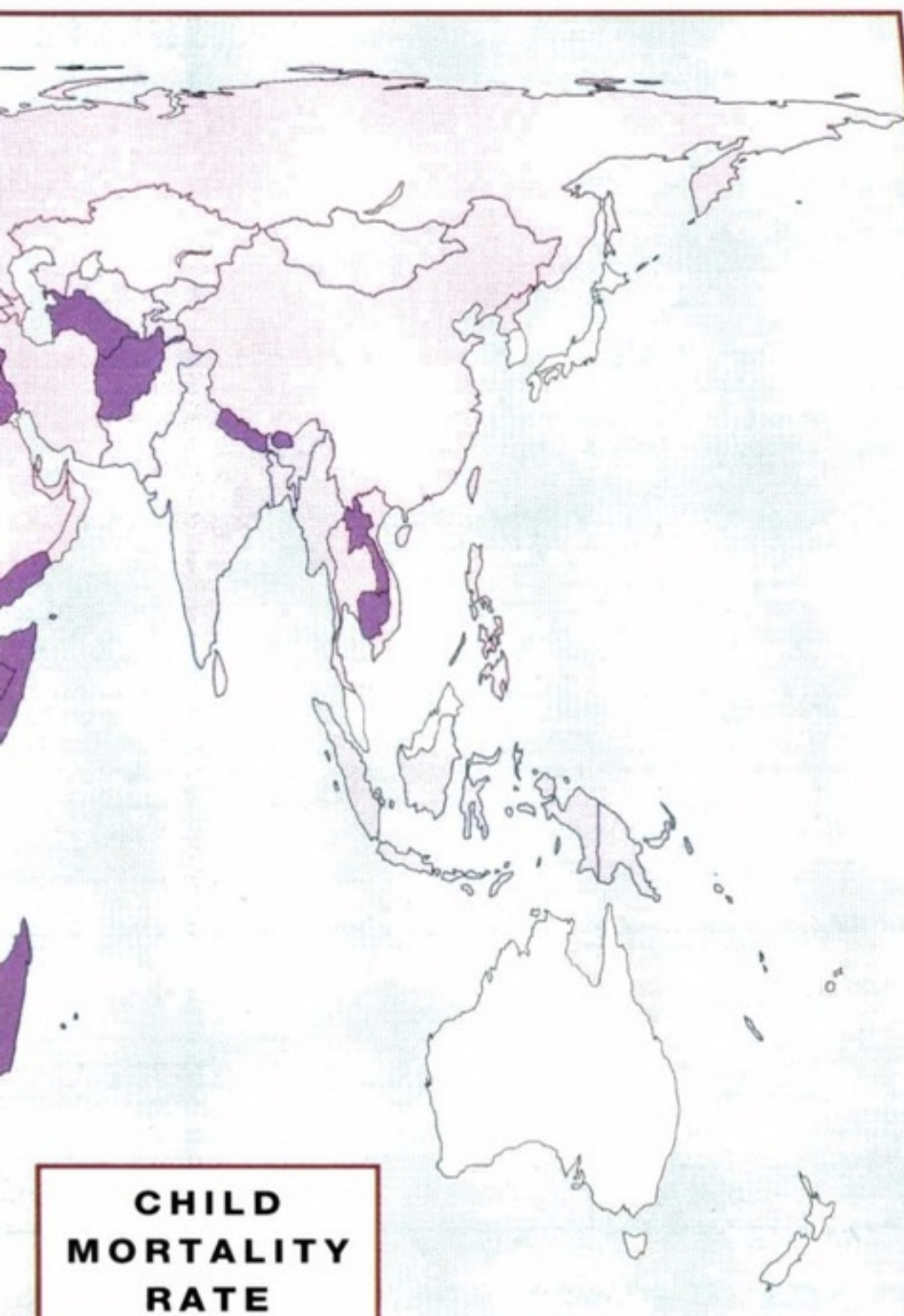
- Low
- Middle
- High
- Very high

This map representing the state of the world's basic needs is drawn from *State of the World's Ch* the development rights block. Other sources: *Human Development Report 1992*, UNDP; *World D*



Measuring the state of the world's civil and political rights is based on the system adopted by Charles Beitz in the *World Human Rights Guide* (OUP 1992) – also the source for the statistical material on this block. All 1993 figures and assessments have been independently updated by the NI.

Measured on the one hand in terms of civil and political rights, and on the other in terms of economic development. We can argue chicken-and-egg but it is clear that both are vital – and that citizens of the world must choose out on both counts.



CHILD MORTALITY RATE

Source: UNICEF, 1993. This is also a source for the statistical material on child mortality. Source: *Development Report*, World Bank; *Third World Guide* 1993/94.

DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS

The gulf between the rich world and the poor world in the delivery of the basic human rights to food, health and education has been narrowing over the last three decades but is still vast.



HEALTH

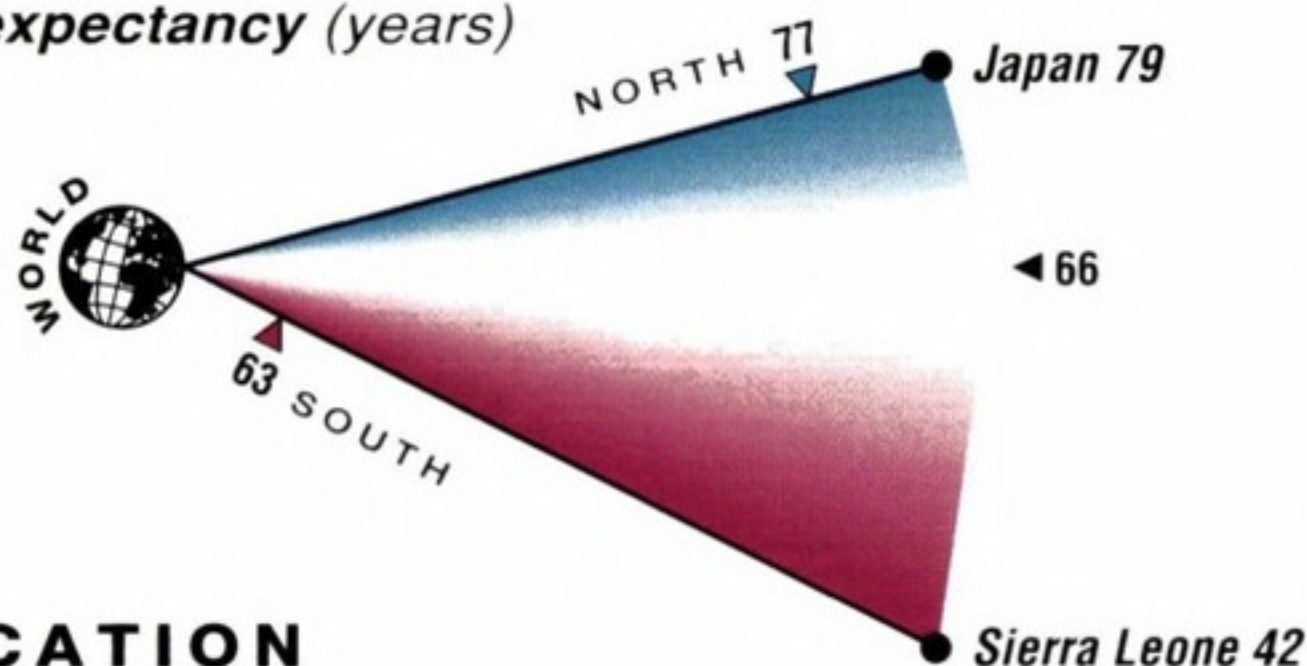
Long-term progress...

- Average life expectancy in the world is now 66 years — 20 years more than in 1960.
- The child mortality rate has halved in 30 years.

But...

- 1.3 billion people still lack access to safe water and 2.3 billion to sanitation.
- 14 million under-fives die each year.

Life expectancy (years)



EDUCATION

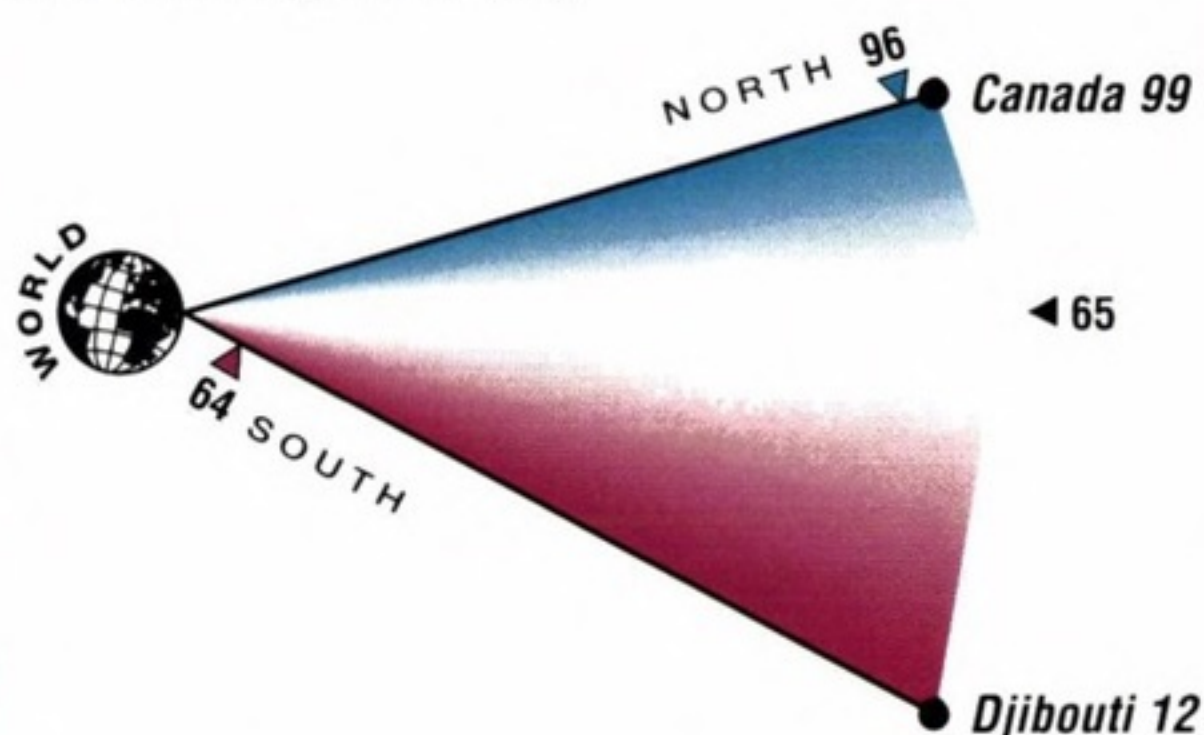
Long-term progress...

- The adult literacy rate worldwide has increased by more than one-third since 1970.
- Nearly three-quarters of the world's children are enrolled in school.

But...

- One billion adults are still illiterate, including 600 million women.
- 300 million children are out of school.

Adult literacy rate (%)

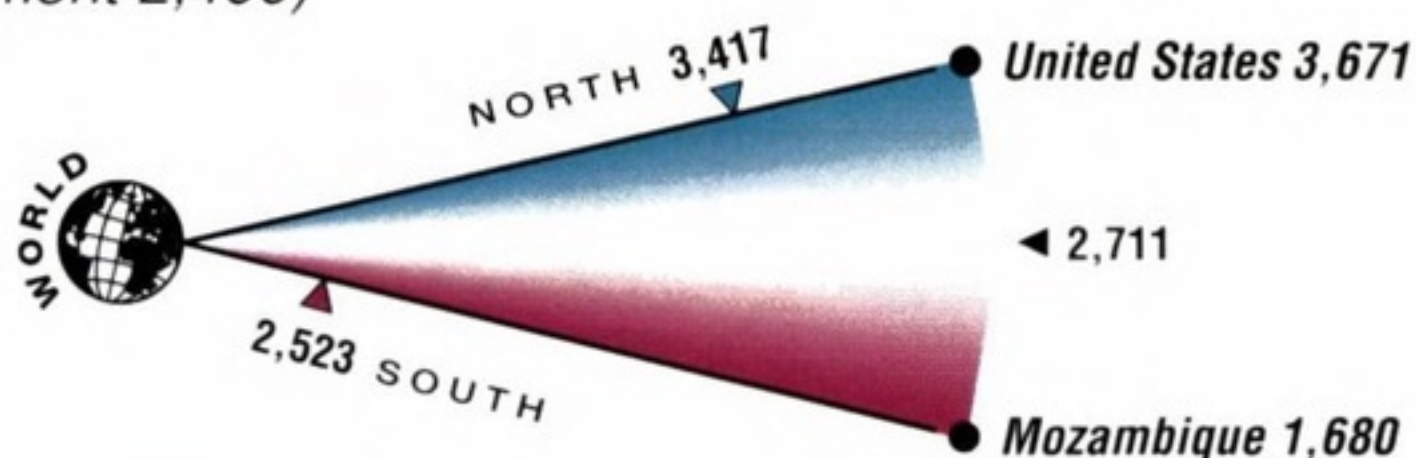


FOOD

Long-term progress...

- Daily calorie supply per head worldwide is now about 110% of the overall requirement, up from 90% 25 years ago.
 - Third World food production grew at 3.2% between 1971 and 1984, outpacing the population growth of 2.6% over the same period.
- But...*
- Over 100 million people were affected by famine in 1990.
 - Over a quarter of the world's people do not get enough food.

Daily calorie supply per person
(average requirement 2,400)



The possession

Was it madness? Were some strange spirits taking control of the Conference? Or had the delegates just had too rich a lunch?

A story by Sindiwe Magona.

OF course, the incident would not appear in the report on the Conference. How could it? Not one of the delegates understood what exactly had happened. But each would remember the amazing event with much misgiving. And some would send deputies

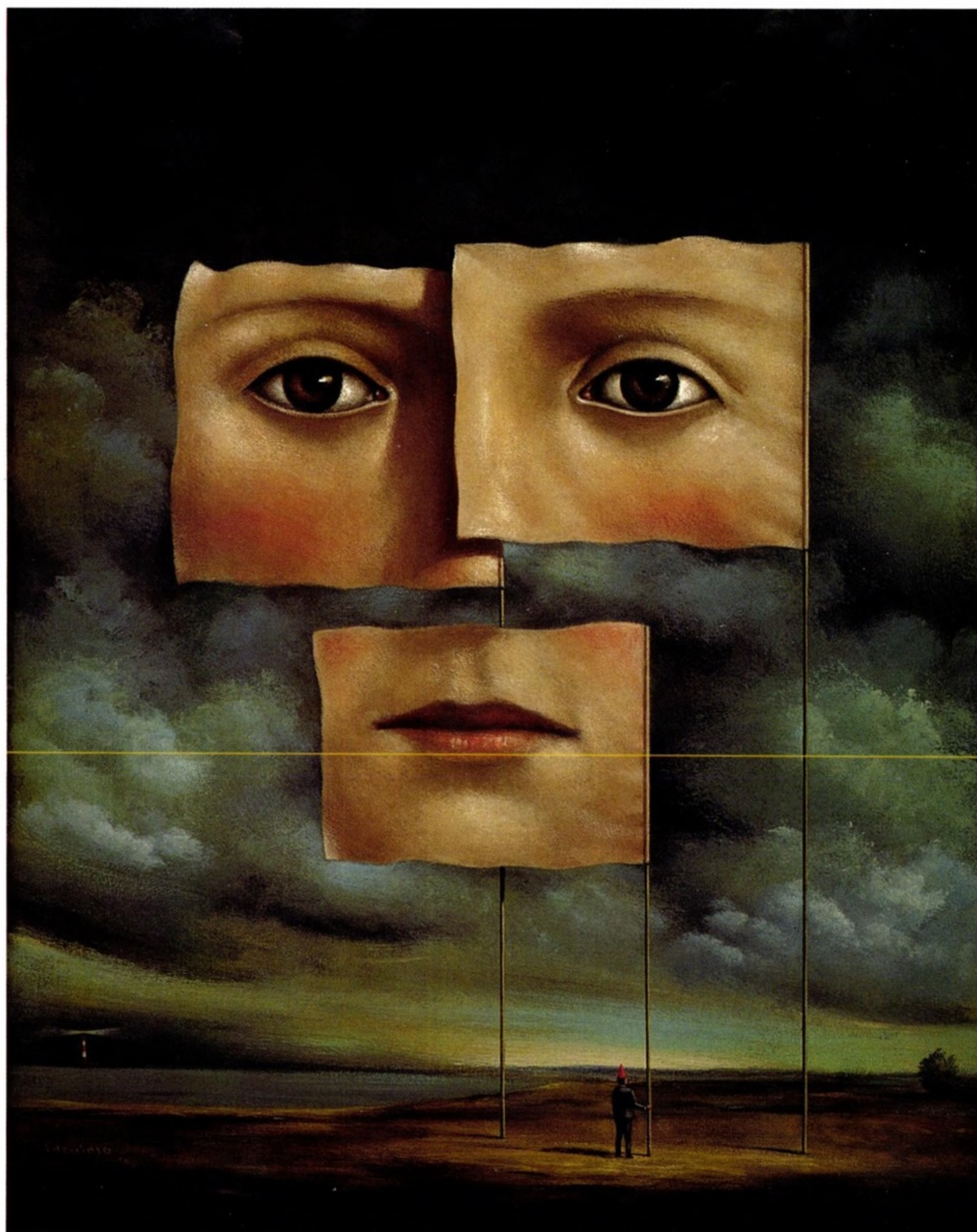
next time there was a conference instead of attending themselves. And the next time. And the next.

It was a Conference to Right the Wrongs of a World Woefully Out of Joint. They came from all corners of the globe to do their duty. Came in their slick, dark

suits and their chauffeured limousines; sat with their delegations and acolytes in the Marble Hall; nodded in corridors to faces familiar from the economic shindig in Bangkok or the environmental hoopla in Addis. They gathered to represent the views of their own peoples, to consider the weighty questions before them with the requisite depth of furrow in their brows.

But then something else happened, which pulled their glazed eyes towards the pudgy representative of Outer Manedristan. Just as he was entering the third sub-section, first paragraph of his peroration, he seemed to be taken over by another voice

'Tell us we will be widows. Tell us we



RAFAL OLBINSKI / ARTBANK LONDON

will raise our children all by ourselves. Tell us this when we are little girls. And then help us grow up strong and able to be widows who bring up children all alone. Arm us for this eventuality. Otherwise, what is the use of all this knowledge you gather, if it does not prepare the girl-child for her fate?’

The voice was that of a very old woman. No doubt about that; strong though it was. Firm, loud, unwavering. But it was still the voice of an old woman; unmistakable. Chairs swivelled as delegates craned their necks this way and that, attempting to align sight and sound. But the speaker who had the floor seemed totally unaware of the stir he was causing. Unruffled, he continued with what he thought was his speech.

‘I was a girl. Big brother was sent to school. But I was a girl. Small brother was sent to school. But I was made a wife. I cannot complain. My husband was a good man. When the children came he worked and gave us money for food. But then he died. Now I was a widow. Nobody had told me what to do when I became a widow. The bank asked how could they give credit to a woman who could not write her name? And I had no answer. I beg you, tell all the little girls that they will be widows. That men die earlier than women. And send them, all of them, to school. Tell them to learn to read and write so that when they become widows the banks will trust them and give them loans. Little girls, write...your... names. Learn! Learn to write your names.’

Without the slightest pause, the speaker continued with what he had been saying before the interruption by the old woman’s voice. His droning tones resumed their diplomatic, circuitous tour around his subject: *Abuse of human rights in some Third World countries.*

Eyes which had met uneasily during the strange interruption now reverted to their normal glazed tour of the upper reaches of the marble pillars, the cherubs daubed on the ceiling. We must have imagined it. Or perhaps the learned speaker from Outer Manedristan had simply had a brainstorm, poor chap. At any rate normal service has been resumed now.

But only until the second hijacking of a speaker. (That is what those who dared give a name to what happened at the Conference called it: hijacking). The delegate from West Axum, a smooth-tongued former president with a smug air, was just getting into his stride when a different voice entirely started to emerge from his lips. This time, the voice had a lisp. It was hesitant and shy. A little girl’s voice. So frail. She did not sound afraid. No. Just sad.

‘Study war no more. Shut your big houses where death is manufactured. Seal

the windows. Lock the doors of these terrible houses. Give the rich men who own them jobs in hospitals and bush clinics where they can see the results of their killing machines. Send them to work in the world’s graveyards where they can read the sad tombstones of men, women and children killed in their games. Perhaps then other children will not lose their parents as I have, will not lose their homes. Perhaps they will even have money to go to school and food to eat. And their days will not be swathed in fear.’

If it had not been so disturbing it would have been a source of some merriment to hear such sentiments expressed by an elder statesman whose own military budget had once been the envy and worry of his neighbours. As it was, a sort of blank hysteria descended upon the delegates: no-one dared to break the spell, to be the one to stand up and protest at this bizarre gate-crashing of the meditations of the mighty.

Simultaneous translation suffered a real blow. Each ‘intruder’ was understood by all there present without recourse to their earpieces. It was a kind of Babel. Only, much, much more. Babel never boasted so many languages as this.

The baby said not a word. How could he? So weak, his faint mewling took the little energy he had. Malnutrition does that, you know. But the mewling was enough. That sound. It went to the hearts of all assembled in the Great Hall of Delegates. And found in each some ancient vestige of human kindness. Granted, a morsel... but still. And the message was more poignant coming through the rather fleshy lips of the obese delegate from one of the richest countries in the world.

‘The secret code is broken,’ said the next intruder, rather threateningly. ‘They

The delegates listened all right. And for years after, in the darkest part of the night they would wake up with a start and remember how those voices reached down deep into their guts and twisted with their truth.

have heard of your meeting. The lives you supposedly represent. You get fat while they die. So they have come to deliver their own messages and remind you that they are there, that they are watching as you disport yourselves.’

Greed. War. Fear. Hatred. Hunger. Those are just some of the things the voices talked about. The village woman. The orphaned girl. The unborn, the mother, and the worker. Barefooted children walking hungry to school and the song of the

hunchback scouring the countryside looking for work.

‘Close down the meeting halls and the hotels and the restaurants,’ said the last of the invaders. ‘Use the money you waste on meetings to ease the lives that grow daily desperate. Go back to the community. So that your eyes will be opened. So that your hearts inside your bodies will grow and grow. And listen to the prayers of the people. Listen to what we say we need. And don’t come and give us needs we didn’t even know were there. Can’t you see, if the belly isn’t grumbling, it can’t be hungry? Please, listen. LISTEN!’



The delegates listened all right. They had never listened to a series of speeches with such concentration before. And for years after, in the darkest part of the night they would wake up with a start and remember how those voices reached down deep into their guts and twisted with their truth. They would look with doubt on the assumption that governed their lives, that they were doing their duty by their nation, that they were passing their lives in service. But the moment would pass. They would stroll across to their windows and see the pleasant gardens on the other side of the glass, the lawns and flowerbeds stretching down to the security fence and the night guard’s hut. And they would curse themselves for their idiocy. After all, no-one else had ever mentioned what had happened. Perhaps it had been no more than a bad dream.

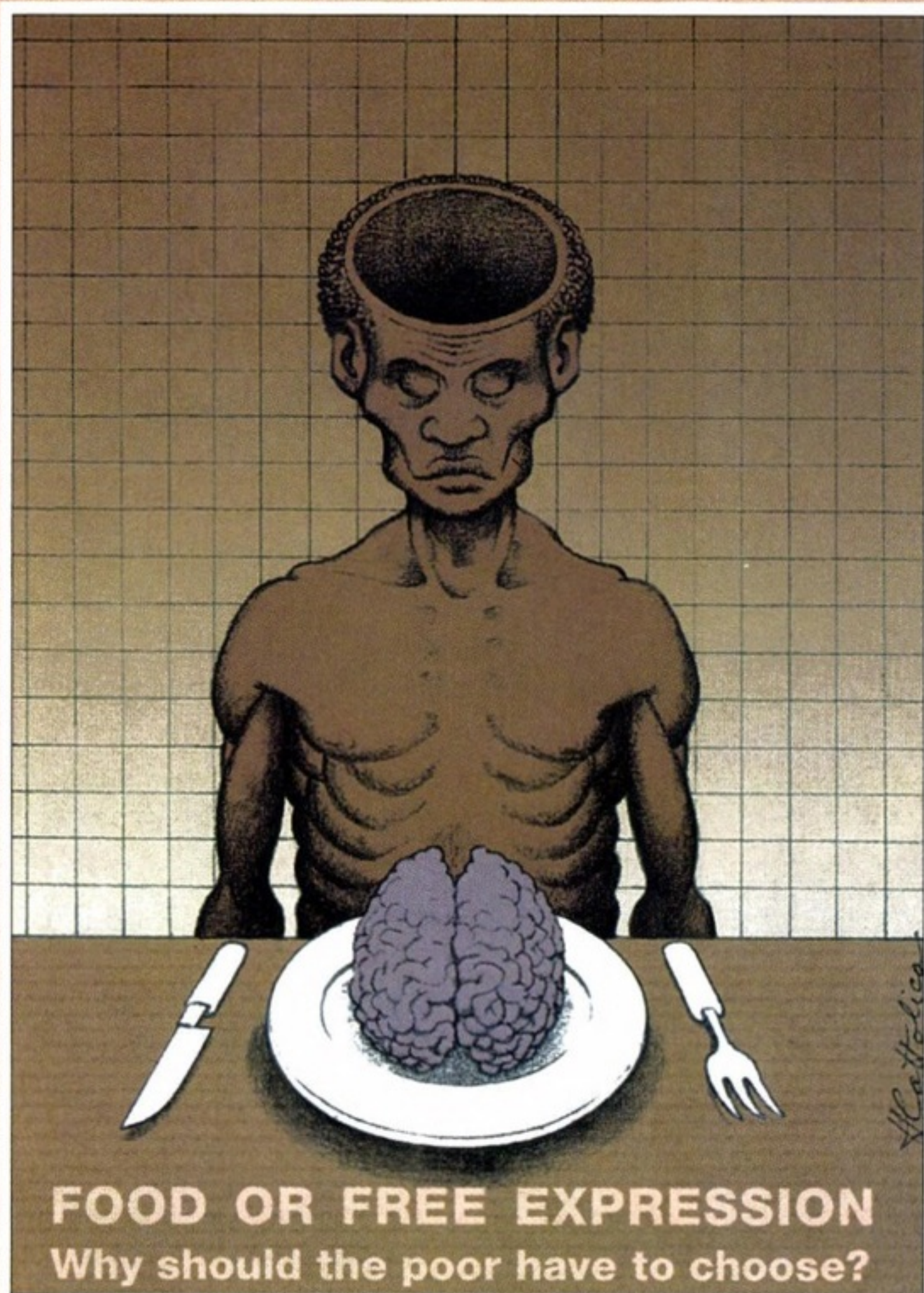
They would open the drawer and pull out the much-thumbed official record of the Conference. There were the unsullied pearls of the delegate from Outer Manedristan, down in black and white without any intrusion. They would sigh with relief to see that the Conference had been no different from all the other conferences and summit meetings of their eminent careers. And they would return to their beds, thanking their lucky stars as they sank into peaceful oblivion for the foresight of the organizer who had taken the precaution of closing that particular session to the members of the press. ■

Sindiwe Magona is a South African writer who currently lives in New York. *Living, Loving and Lying Awake at Night*, a collection of her short stories, was published in 1992 by *The Women’s Press* in London.

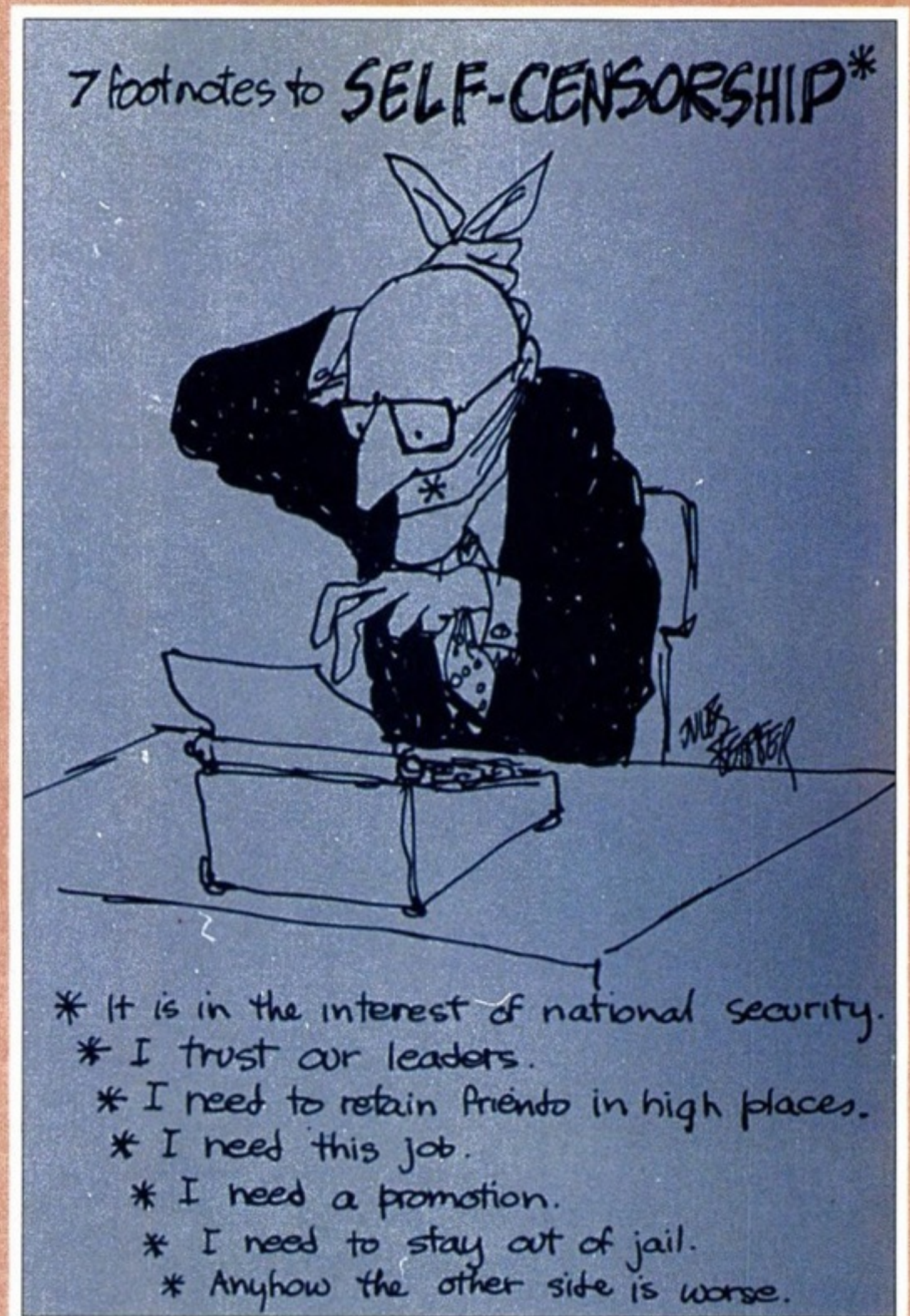
Simply... human rights – a cartoonists' view



Jean-Michel Folon, Belgium



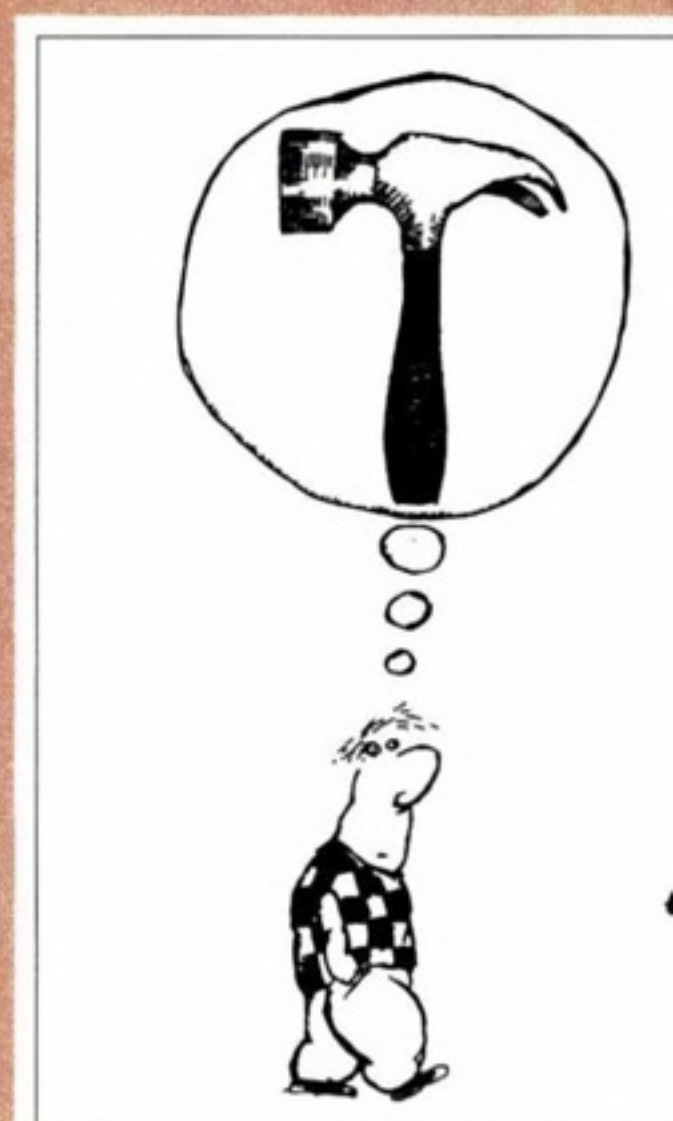
Hector Cattolica, Argentina



Jules Feiffer, United States



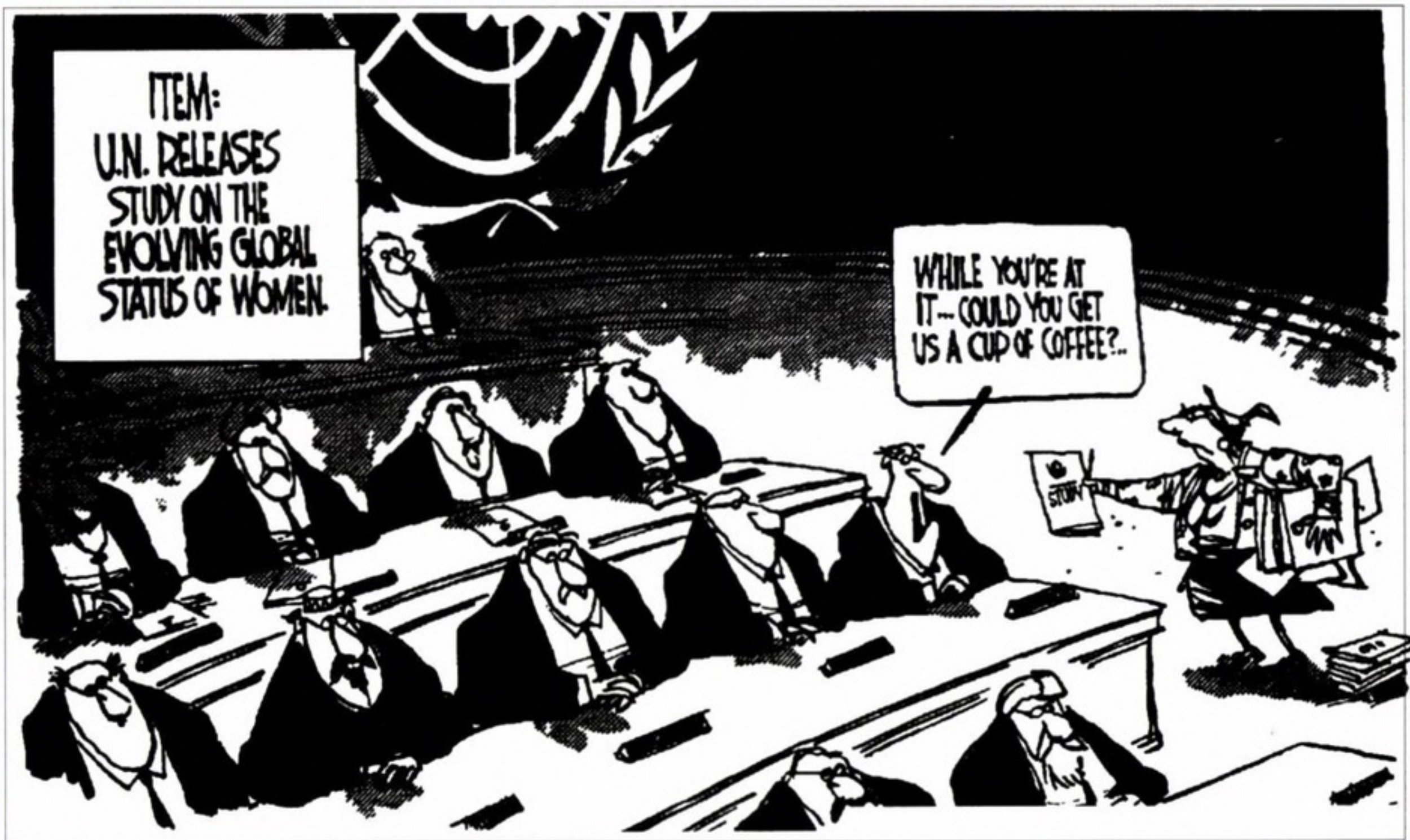
Pessin, France



Yayo, Colombia



Petra Whelan,
United Kingdom

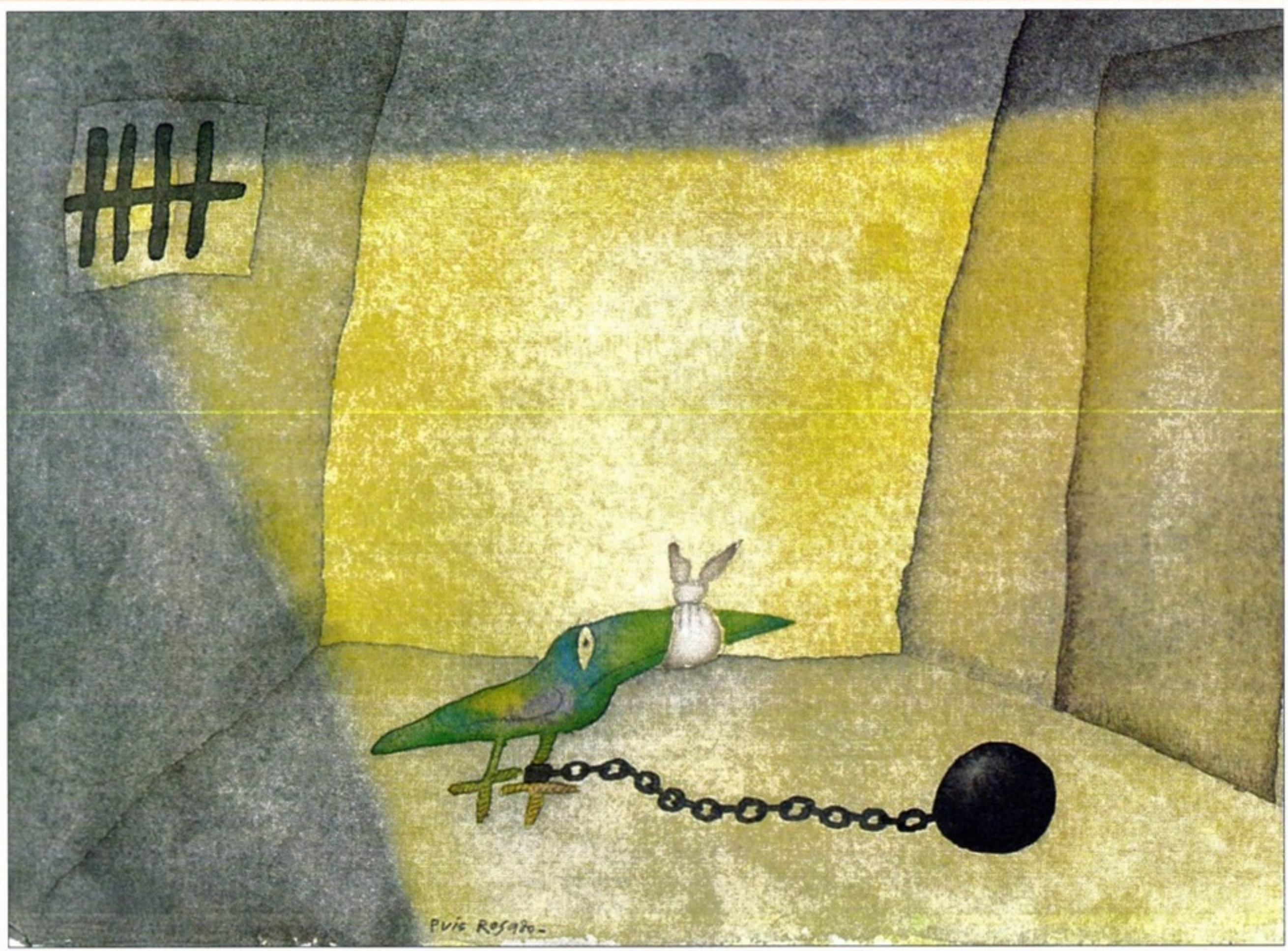


Gable, Canada



Yayo, Colombia

Fernando Puig-Rosado, Spain





C LOVINY / GAMMA; SHOE SOLE: ROBERT WINN / CAMERA PRESS

Joining the global economic race: one of Jakarta's newest sports-shoe factories.

Reeboks, rappers and losers

Warning: your training shoes may have already damaged someone else's health. Peter Hinchings reports on the Indonesian roots of the world's favourite running shoes.

THE last time you slipped into a pair of Nike or Reebok running shoes, you probably didn't give a thought to who manufactured them or where. But it's worth wondering...

Almost certainly they came from Indonesia. The workers of 'Jabotabek' there make all sorts of luxury goods for Western markets: Nike, Reebok and Adidas trainers, Levi Strauss jeans and Calvin Klein Y-fronts.

Jabotabek embraces the city of Jakarta and the hinterland of Bogor, Tangerang and Bekasi. It is Indonesia's 'showcase' industrial complex, where South Korean and Taiwanese companies use cheap Indonesian labour to manufacture shoes, shirts and textiles under licence to the

Western label-owners who buy back the semi-finished products, slap on a massively marked up price, and hawk them to joggers, rappers and *GQ* readers in European and North American markets.

This may seem a happy image of incipient Third World capitalism but a closer look shows the underbelly of one of the world's nastiest regimes, whose industrial-relations policy makes England's during the Tolpuddle massacre seem almost benign.

And joggers through Central Park and rappers down the Champs Elysées might reflect on the amount it actually costs to make their \$130 trainers: 'a few cents', says a British industrial-relations specialist who recently toured Jabotabek.

In Indonesia, the 'legal minimum wage' is \$1.27 a day, the second lowest in Asia

after Bangladesh. A survey of 12,000 factories in Tangerang last year revealed that less than 40 per cent of employers even bothered to pay the minimum wage.

'Shoe-factory workers run amok' ran the headline in the Indonesian daily *Merdeka* last September, referring to 8,000 workers who went on strike in protest at their abysmal conditions. It was one of more than 30 strike actions in one district of Java during the last three months of 1992, involving nearly 50,000 factory workers and bringing to 130 the number of major strikes in Indonesia last year.

At the centre of the workers' complaint is decent wages. The \$1.27 minimum is still well below that stipulated under Indonesia's 1945 Constitution, which states that every citizen has the right to demand the basic needs for survival. Low wages have brought acute social deprivation: 80 per cent of Indonesian female workers, who make up the vast majority of textile labour, are malnourished, according to the International Labour Office (ILO).

But there's more to it than wage levels: in many factories wages are cut if employees go to the toilet unauthorized, pregnancy results in instant dismissal, and

holidays are allocated at the discretion of employers in whose ears the words 'maternity leave' and 'sick leave' sound like the language of another planet.

Content to abuse basic human dignity for as long as they can get away with it, Indonesian employers usually deduct 20 per cent of a worker's salary when she or he is absent. A normal working week is more than 50 hours, with no overtime pay, and the minimum international standards for health and safety are ignored.

Such contempt for humanity reflects the traditional Indonesian attitude to workers who, according to an editorial in the *Jakarta Post*¹, are 'a docile people who respect their elders and leaders... easily trainable to do manual jobs. (The) puzzling question is... how the workers... could turn into a highly agitated and militant mob.'

Astonishing though it may seem to this leader-writer, inhuman conditions often breed discontent and well-organized resistance. But workers' resistance is being met with brutal suppression. Workers who complain about their conditions are dismissed; those who dare to organize collective action are rounded up and interrogated, often beaten and electrocuted by the

military – and then dismissed.

The key precondition for business success in Indonesia is having a chum in the military, since Ministerial Decree 342 (1985) authorizes the military to intervene in industrial disputes. 'Employers in Indonesia who don't have a relationship with the military are finished,' explains Teten Masduki, a prominent Indonesian labour representative who was himself interrogated by the military for striking.

When 14,000 workers from Gajah Tunggal, a truck-and-tyre company, went on strike in August 1992, not only the local police and the district military came to the factory, but also the army combat unit, cavalry, and Jakarta Metropolitan Command.

A year earlier 8,500 of the 9,250 female staff employed by Great River, a Korean/Indonesian textile company, went on strike against pitiful wages, 13-hour days, and the practice of docking one-fifth of wages for going to the toilet without authorization. The women's job involved stitching Calvin Klein and Triumph jackets and underwear; these may have made useful surrender flags but little else in the face of the massed military regiments. As it was, 10 of the ringleaders were harassed, interrogated, and dismissed. One woman was heard to ask: 'Why can't we have decent wages when each jacket we produce costs \$425 in European markets?'

Sacked workers' names are entered on a blacklist which is circulated among employers, removing any chance of their getting another job. The interrogation of ringleaders may last only six hours, but a lot can be done to a human being in six hours, explains Amnesty International's Indonesia researcher.

'They are put under extreme pressure to say whether they have links with political organizations, to fill out questionnaires about their families and relatives, to give details of their background, their attitude to the state and constitution... The interrogators routinely beat people up; electric shocks are very common, and are used especially on people belonging to political organizations opposed to the Government.'

'Often,' he adds, 'the interrogators simply lay a revolver on the desk, or put it against the victim's head, shouting "you're nothing... just speak!"'

Security is so tight that factories producing Western goods look like military compounds, constantly under surveillance by the Army.

The Suharto regime which came to power in 1965 still appears to suspect reds under the bed, drawing no comfort from the possibility that Indonesia's military may have already rounded up, tortured and eliminated the last of the archipelago's Communist bogeypeople. 'All that remains of the Indonesian Communist Party are pockets of

State of the world's workers

TRADE unionists are slaughtered with impunity in Colombia; Malawi's life president Hastings Kamuzu Banda imprisons anyone suspected of trade-union activity; the death by assassination of leading trade unionists in South Africa is increasing sharply.

These facts come from the latest survey of trade-union rights published by the Brussels-based International Confederation of Free Trade Unions. They represent the tiniest tip of the iceberg: during 1992 the world moved decisively backwards in terms of the rights – human and economic – of employees.

● In the Americas the ICFTU catalogues a disturbing pattern of abuse, intimidation, torture and extra-judicial execution of trade unionists. Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, El Salvador, Guatemala and Haiti were by far the worst offenders.

● In Africa many countries pursued a brutal and relentless campaign of terror against trade unionists; assassinations were common, especially in South Africa, where violence intensified in the industrial heart-

land of the Transvaal.

● In Asia the cost of economic growth continued to be the abuse of basic human dignity on the factory floor, especially among the new 'dragon economies'. China subjected countless trade unionists to torture in detention – and arrested three for holding a commemoration ceremony.

● In most countries of the Middle East trade unions were scarcely imaginable, let alone recognized.

● In Europe basic workers' rights were further curtailed. In Greece the right to collective bargaining by state employees was suspended; in Germany the right to strike continued to be denied by law to

civil-service employees; while in the Vatican the Administration refused even to recognize the Vatican Association of Lay Workers.

Employers had a good year, despite the recession.

¹ Survey of Trade Union Rights (May 1993), International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, Rue Montagne Aux Herbes Potagères 37-41, B-1000 Brussels, Belgium.





The darker side of Indonesia's industrial belt – assembling cigarettes by hand.

old people who meet quietly in their twos and threes,' says a human-rights worker in Indonesia (who prefers not to be named).

The only recognized 'union' in Indonesia is the state-run SPSI (Serikat Pekerja Seluruh Indonesia), whose representatives on the factory floor genuinely try to voice workers' complaints, but find they are overruled by their seniors. By an astonishing coincidence the chair of the SPSI, Imam Sudarwo, is a large textile industrialist, while the new Minister of Manpower, Abdul Latief, owns one of Indonesia's biggest supermarket chains. Between them they do a nifty double (triple?) act of dancing between the military, employers and workers, urging employers on the one hand to pay, and workers on the other to accept, the minimum wage, the level of which they set.

Despite Indonesia's ratification of ILO Convention 98 – affirming workers' right to collective action – the country's leaders cock a snook at foreign governments who condemn its practices. Indonesia, after all, is cosily patronized by Western multinationals.

This display of indifference is not surprising in the light of what happened after Indonesia's massacre of thousands of East Timorese at Dili in 1991.² The Canadian and Dutch governments stopped all aid to Indonesia in protest, at which point the Inter-governmental Group on Indonesia was reformed (minus the Dutch) and actually increased aid from about \$4 billion in 1992 to \$5.2 billion in 1993. The British were very keen not to offend, while Australia, the one country which has contradicted the UN by recognizing East Timor as part of Indonesia (helped by oil and natural gas discoveries in the Timor Sea), mouthed platitudes about it not being appropriate to condemn Indonesia in public...

The Clinton Administration isn't so chirpy about these developments. The US-

based human-rights group Asia Watch asked the US Trade Representative last June to review labour rights and practices in Indonesia. Under US law the President could end preferential trade agreements with a country (like Indonesia) which is 'not taking steps to afford internationally recognized worker rights' – including freedom of association, the right to bargain collectively and freedom from forced labour.

In November 1992 the Indonesian Government submitted a 170-page response, drawn up by US law firm White and Case, and sent a top-level delegation to Washington to protest against the petitions.

President Clinton was to announce his decision in April 1993 but still had not done so as the **NI** went to press. According to Asia Watch, 'if benefits are cut as a result, the annual cost to Indonesia of the rise in tariffs on Indonesian exports coming into the US will be about \$400 million'.

Meanwhile worldwide demand for trainers is at an all-time high. The London-based Indonesia Human Rights Campaign says Nike has authorized four South Korean joint-venture factories in Jakarta and West Java. Workers in one, PT Astra Doo Yang, receive wages below the national minimum of \$1.27 a day.

But what on earth are we to make of Reebok, one of the world's largest shoe-makers, which similarly contracts production from Indonesian factories? Fernando de Araujo, the East Timorese human-rights campaigner who was tried and sentenced to nine years' imprisonment in Jakarta for 'subversion', recently received an award... from the Reebok Human Rights Programme. ■

Peter Hitchings is an Australian financial journalist.

¹ Jakarta Post 14 November 1992. ² Indonesia-East Timor: The Suppression of Dissent, Amnesty International 1992.

The optimist

Paul Ham interviews Pierre Sané, Amnesty International's first Secretary-General from the Third World.

'SOUTH Africa will become a peaceful society of different races, a moral example to the rest of the world. West Africa will flourish.'

These views seem strangely subversive, so wildly are they at odds with prevailing assumptions in the West, which see Africa as doomed. Yet they offer a glimpse into the mind of Pierre Sané, the 45-year-old Senegalese political scientist who recently took over as Secretary-General of Amnesty International, the world's largest human-rights organization.

Sané is an optimist, despite assuming command of Amnesty at a time when basic human rights are routinely abused in many parts of the world: torturers go on electrocuting and dismembering; governments 'disappear' their opponents with impunity.

He is not doe-eyed. He has seen human suffering on a 'massive scale', having spent 12 years overseeing aid programmes in the most neglected regions of Africa with Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC). He was confronted daily, he says, by 'the severely debilitating effects of poverty and mass suffering'.

'I believe the individual cannot really be a human being if his or her basic needs are not met, and those basic needs include security, subsistence, health, education – all the things that make somebody a member of humanity.'

But do people have a 'human right' to basic needs? Shouldn't Amnesty stick to protesting about torture and the imprisonment of dissidents?

Behind such assumptions lie ignorance and complacency, Sané suggests. While acknowledging that Amnesty International, under its mandate, can only pursue specific outrages, he emphasizes the inextricable relationship between human rights and economic development

– their so-called ‘indivisibility’.

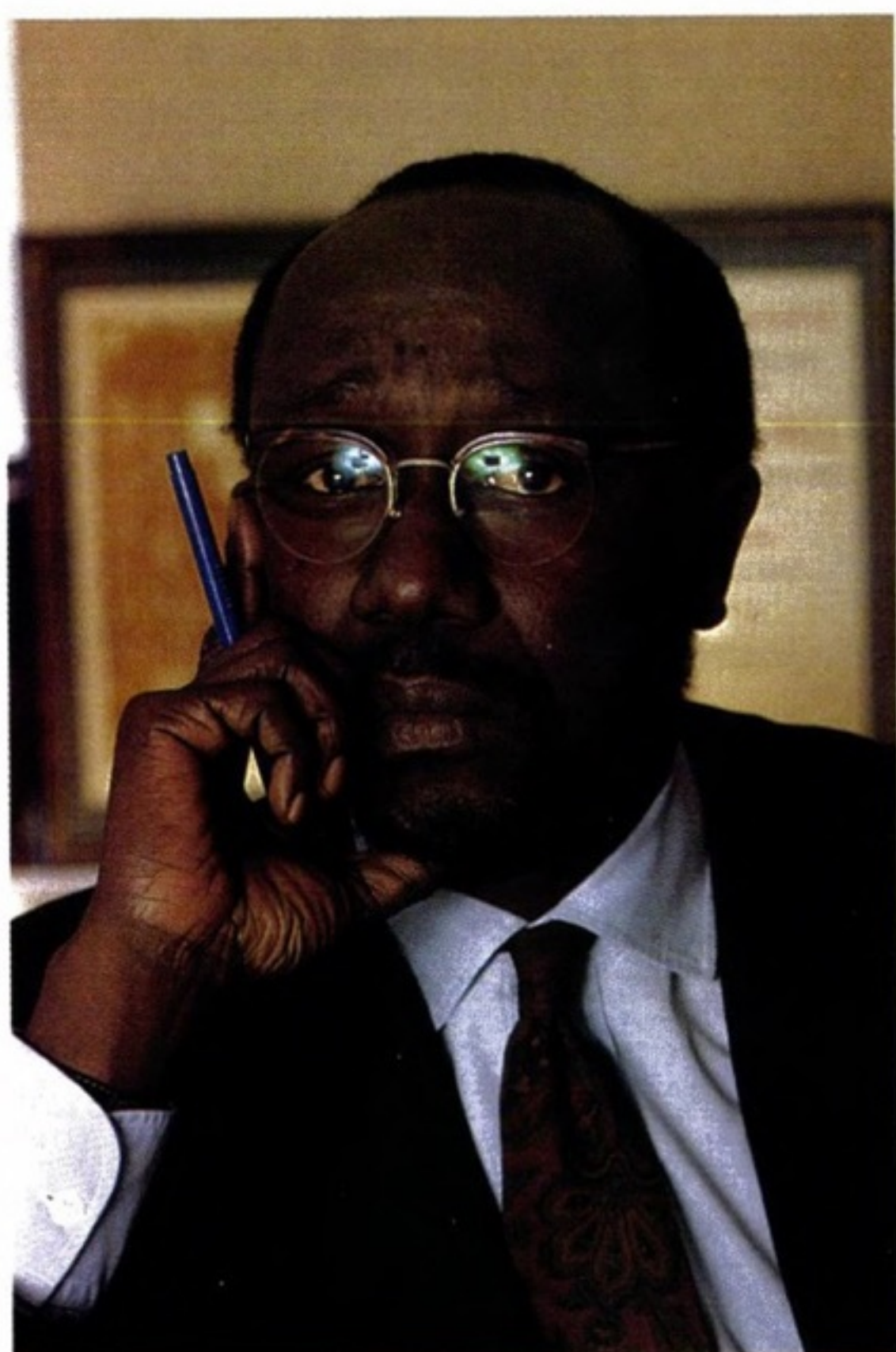
He suggests that the chief problem in poor countries is the gradual stripping away of the means by which people might procure basic needs: the confiscation or sequestration of land from farmers; the misappropriation of a country’s resources into bloated, ultimately useless, militias, at the expense of schools, health and infrastructure.

Hence his emphasis on ‘empowerment’ – on giving people the ‘right’ to tend their land, to sell their produce, to engage in trade relationships, to expect schools and hospitals in return for the payment of taxes. These are justly called ‘human rights’ and ones so basic that the West takes them for granted.

‘I believe in popular participation and democracy; I believe people should be empowered; the convulsions we are seeing in many parts of Africa and the developing world are symptoms of the transition to democracy and capitalism.’ He stresses the idea that improvements will come only from the bottom up, from the ‘grassroots’ and he believes that recognition of such basic human rights is spreading along with democracy.

Sané comes from a family of middle-class intellectuals – ‘I am a petty bourgeois!’ he says with an ironic smile, as if he has just made the discovery. He speaks proudly of his family’s involvement in the ‘long history of resistance’ to the French, who occupied Senegal for 300 years: his uncle was jailed for political dissent, and other family members were victimized.

Spreading hope: Pierre Sané from Senegal.



After a spell studying in France – ‘I was throwing stones in Paris in 1968’ – he returned to Senegal and became an accountant. This career was shortlived because it meant ‘assisting foreign companies to pay as little tax as possible, or going into suspicious deals with governments, which I was not prepared to do’. Eventually, in 1978, he joined the Ottawa-based IDRC and rose swiftly through the ranks to become its regional director.

He had a strict Catholic upbringing but he no longer attends church. His wife, Ndeye, an historian, is Muslim by birth, and their marriage has shaped Sané’s belief that religions are reconcilable and not, as history would suggest, mutually exclusive.

‘It is simply not acceptable in 1993 that human beings must be crushed in order to achieve economic competitiveness.’

‘We raise our children in a spirit of tolerance and freedom of choice. I have the faith. I don’t believe you need to practise the formal rites. I think that if God were able to understand many languages he certainly would be able to understand many religions.’

Sané’s African roots inevitably shape his outlook – but often in unexpected ways. ‘The reasons for optimism in Africa are not always well-presented,’ he says, with characteristic understatement. He argues, for instance, that the terrific rate of population growth in Africa will have a benign influence much like India’s, which confounded the pessimists. ‘The rate of population growth is often presented as a burden on existing resources. But people are not just mouths; they are brains and arms. They are producers. More than 60 per cent of the African population is under 15, and tomorrow they will rebuild Africa if political conditions are changed to allow them to engage in productive activity.’

Empowerment again comes through as his key message: give people the chance, remove the political stooges denying their basic freedoms, and they will perform miracles. ‘We should in our actions seek to make governments not just accountable to the international community, but to their people, so that change can come about from within.’

But making governments accountable to their people is a thuddingly difficult task. Witness the rampant disregard for the basic rights of workers in Asia, whose cheap labour is gleefully exploited by Western companies. What can Amnesty International do? Isn’t it plain hypocrisy to expect Asian governments and employers to respect workers’ rights when the Industrial Revolution in Europe and America itself depended upon the flagrant

exploitation of cheap – and child – labour?

‘That is high on the mind of Asian governments,’ says Sané. ‘Many countries in Asia see Amnesty’s insistence on the workers’ rights as threatening their competitiveness economically... because their competitiveness is based on the harsh exploitation of labour. But it is simply not acceptable in 1993 that human beings must be crushed in order to achieve economic competitiveness.’

He is equally sanguine about the reappearance of violent racism in Europe, daunted neither by the prospect of 30 million refugees arriving over the next three decades nor by Europe’s ability to accommodate them: ‘I don’t think these figures are big... look at the number of migrants who occupied the Americas. And consider the needs Europe will have tomorrow for workers to pay for their pensioners.’

So refugees should be seen as an economic necessity, not a social burden? ‘I think that the idea of nation states has to change with the necessities of the times.’

So too will Africa’s ideas about nationhood. Sané is a founding member of PANAF, an organization which seeks to establish a Pan-African community via the establishment of a single political entity allowing for the free movement of goods, people and services. PANAF would, in Sané’s mind, achieve the crucial goal of undermining African dictators still clinging to power over tiny nation states with frontiers drawn up by departing colonists.

‘At independence African countries placed the priority on building a nation out of the colonial territory, instead of reshaping the map around the people and the regions that previously existed. So I think we have to open the borders to allow the free flow of people, resources and goods, to allow the development of larger states, markets and peaceful societies.’ PANAF, he adds a touch gloomily, is making ‘very, very slow progress’.

Sané draws great hope, however, from South Africa. He led the IDRC mission there in 1986 – ‘a very tricky time’ – which established the first research post to consider the future for South Africa under a post-apartheid government. ‘I came out of South Africa with the clear conviction that the country would make an invaluable contribution to the world tomorrow: by solving the contradiction that exists in the country itself, they will solve the contradiction of race and class. In the US it has not been done, but I believe in South Africa it will be done. The harshness of the repression in South Africa breeds quality in resistance, and the quality of the resistance leaders whom I met there was just incredible.’

It is a salutary message of hope from a man whose job is defined every day by evidence of hopelessness. ■



FORCING car exhaust pipes into people's mouths and leaving the engine running; holding people next to decomposing bodies – these were some of the methods, often personally overseen by President Habré himself, used to terrify anyone suspected of government opposition.

There is a terrible, all-too-familiar pattern about the manner of Chad's descent into poverty and civil war. Since independence from France in 1960, Chad's share of dictators have come and gone, feeding the nation a familiar diet of oppression and brutality – Chad is today one of the world's poorest countries, with an estimated per-capita income of £100 (\$140) and a literacy rate of about 25 per cent.

A series of unstable regimes led to full-scale civil war in the late 1970s. In 1982 the dictator President Habré came to power, and committed his administration to an all-out offensive aimed at crushing opposition groups and executing any prominent dissidents.

Habré failed, however, to eliminate dissent. Rebel groups arose, sometimes from the ranks of previous supporters or government members, and posed serious threats to his power. One, the Movement for the National Salvation of Chad (MOSANAT), staged an uprising against Habré in 1986/87, after which suspected counter-insurgents were publicly burned to death.

Horrific rebel attacks and counter-insurgencies followed closely on each other; it must have seemed to the population that they were living in the mid-

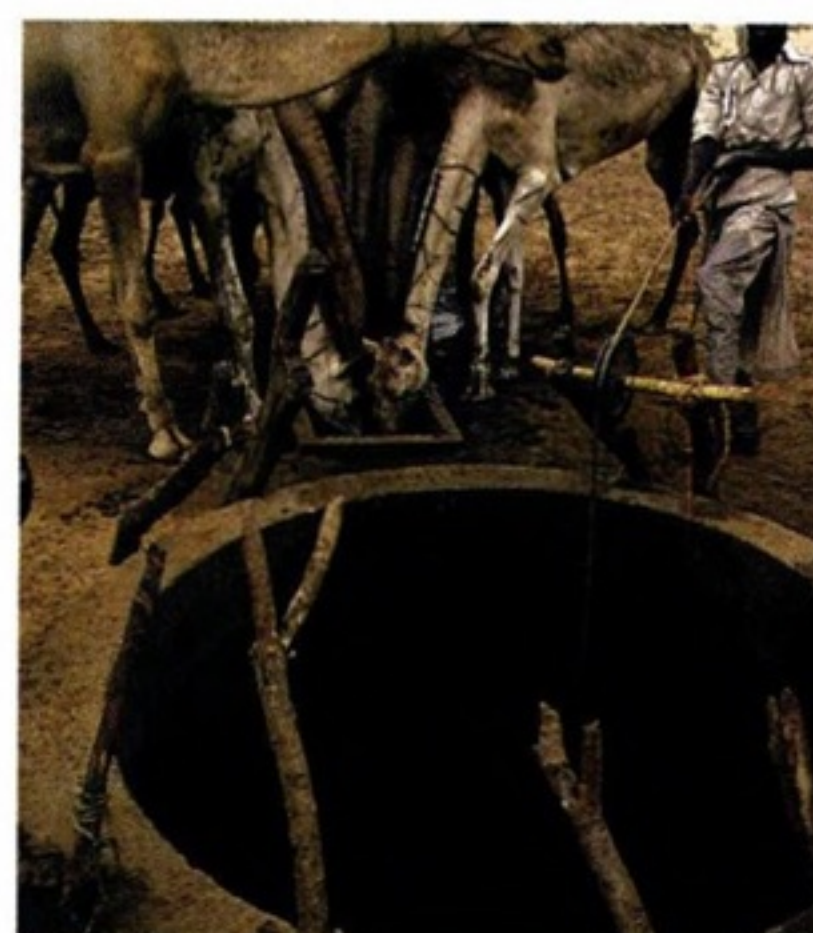
'UNCONTROLLABLE ELEMENTS'

DAPHNE DAVIES CONSIDERS THE LEGACY OF CHAD'S RULERS – A CATALOGUE OF HUMAN RIGHTS ATROCITIES WHICH HAVE LARGELY GONE UNNOTICED IN THE WEST – AND URGES READERS TO WRITE IN PROTEST...



dle of a nightmare. Many villagers fled, as whole areas were completely depopulated.

Habré's orgy of cruelty ended in 1990, when his forces were defeated by the MPS (Patriotic Salvation Movement), led by

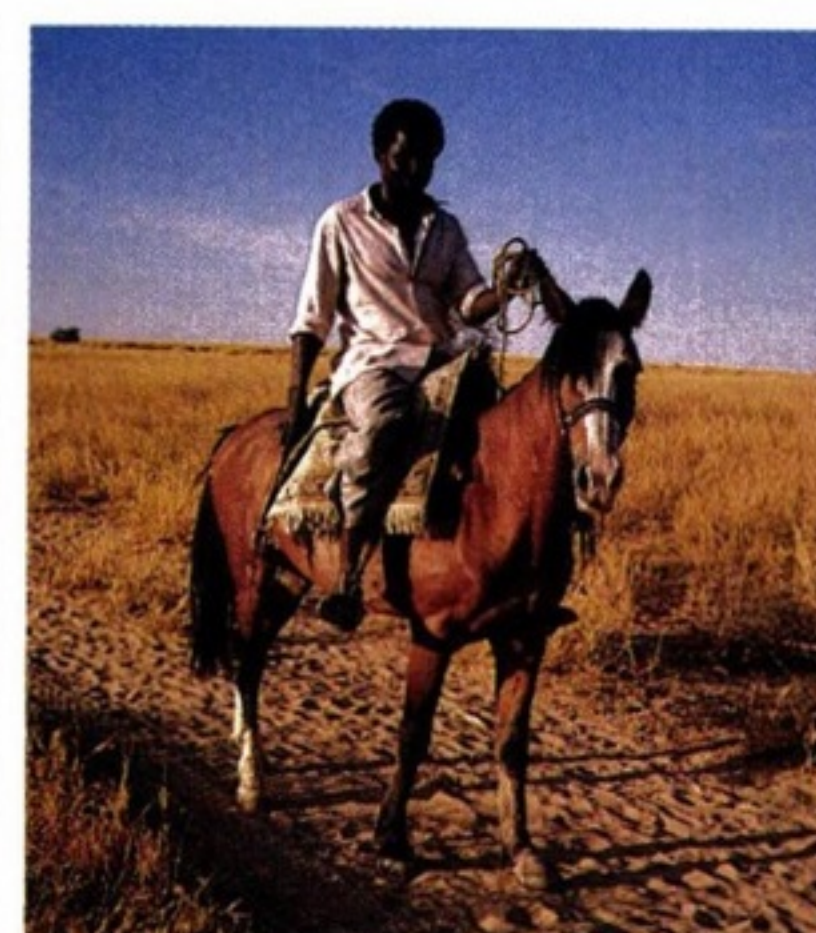


Idriss Deby, who entered Chad from Sudan in March.

The final act by Habré's Presidential Guard, just before they fled the country, was to murder more than 300 political detainees who had been held secretly at the President's headquarters.

The Deby government, which took over on 1 December 1990, found that Habré's dictatorship had been responsible for up to 40,000 deaths and 54,000 detentions. Evidence emerged of makeshift torture centres in swimming pools, and mass graves heaped with bones and skulls. It was during Habré's reign that torture became an 'institutionalized practice', carried out in secret detention centres.

An average of five prisoners died daily in each of N'Djamena's torture centres, according to the Commission of Enquiry set up in



Chad's people have shown great resilience to a succession of dictators.

1990 by the Deby government to look at human-rights violations under the Habré regime.

While the blame for these horrors rests clearly with Habré, foreign governments are culpable by their negligence. After creating Chad as a political entity with scant regard for traditional spheres of power which existed in the nineteenth century, European governments have since simply ignored Chad's growing domestic crisis.

After independence, the French, along with the US, Egypt, Iraq and Zaire, continued to shore up corrupt governments which warred with Libya. According to



ALL PHOTOS: JEREMY HARTLEY / OXFAM



the Commission of Enquiry, American Embassy counsellors regularly visited the director of Chad's DDS (secret police) and during the 1987 Chad/Libya border dispute there were 1,200 French troops and a squadron of French airforce planes stationed in Chad. Given this close co-operation these foreign governments must have been aware of the situation in Chad, but chose to ignore it because it was politically expedient.

A NEW START?

When the new government was sworn in in January 1991, President Deby promised that human rights and democratization would be the primary objectives of the new government.

To this end they set up their Commission to investigate the abuses of Habré's regime, dissolved the DDS (the security police), and released the remaining political prisoners. Political exiles returned from abroad, and steps were taken towards establishing a multi-party system by allowing political parties to form.

However, within a few months killings and mass arrests were again being reported. Torture was reported in the same detention centres used by Habré. Once again, anyone involved in political protest, human-rights work or peaceful opposition which involved criticizing the Government found themselves at risk.

But Chad has salvaged some sense of humanity from the lessons of successive administrations. Despite the renewed violence against government opponents, several human-rights

organizations have sprung up including the Chad Human Rights League (LTDH). While these organizations have been allowed to publish findings critical of the Government, it appears that this can only go so far.

Since December 1990 more than 1,000 people have been detained, many have been tortured or severely ill-treated and several dozen have disappeared. Massacres of people deemed a threat to the Government have started once again. It appears that despite earlier government promises soldiers are killing innocent citizens and torturing people to death, knowing that they will never be brought to justice.

Blaming 'uncontrollable elements' is an easy way for a government to refuse to accept responsibility for human-rights violations against its citizens. Where government forces can kill and torture with impunity, the idea of the law protecting citizens is meaningless.

The previous president, Habré, slipped away to Senegal where he remains to this day. The Senegalese authorities have refused to investigate reports of the torture and killings of prisoners carried out while he was in power, ignoring international human-rights conventions which should force them to do so.

Will President Deby be allowed to get away with murder in the same way? Please join Amnesty International's Chad campaign to ensure that he is aware of international concern.

■ *Daphne Davies is the press officer of Amnesty International British Section.*

SOME VICTIMS OF HUMAN-RIGHTS ABUSES IN CHAD

CASE 1

Six schoolchildren among the 100 civilians murdered in the Doba massacre: In August 1992, government forces went on the rampage in Doba, in southern Chad, shooting people in their homes, in the streets, and in the rice fields where they were working. The soldiers were seeking out members of the armed rebel group, the Committee for the Revitalization of Peace and Democracy (CSNPD) who had been active in the area the day before.

This indiscriminate killing spree left over 100 unarmed civilians dead. While the authorities attempted to justify the killings saying that it was not possible to distinguish between unarmed civilians and rebels, the soldiers shot at least six schoolchildren, killing four of them, and wounding children as young as six years old.

CASE 2

Irene Remadji, aged two-and-a-half, shot and injured by soldiers: Two-year-old Irene Remadji was being carried on her mother's back when the lorry in which she was travelling was stopped at gunpoint by government soldiers in February 1992.

Passengers were ordered to get out and were then shot dead. Irene's mother's body was taken to the morgue; Irene was still tied onto her back, with bullet wounds in her chest and thigh.

Eventually, when it was realized that she was alive, she was untied and left in custody without any medical treatment or food, until she was picked up by relatives the following day.

CASE 3

Joseph Behidi, lawyer and vice-president of the Chad Human Rights League (LTDH): On 16 February 1992 Joseph Behidi, a lawyer and the vice-president of the LTDH, was driving home at 3am when armed men in military uniform forced his car to stop and shot him dead at point-blank range.

Just before this date he had been defending *N'Djamena Hebdo*, an independent newspaper, against defamation charges filed by the Chadian army. Behidi's death caused public outrage, and tens of thousands of people protested in the streets of N'Djamena.

The authorities denied any involvement in this, despite witnesses to the contrary, and have blamed the killing on 'uncontrollable elements'.

CASE 4

Gabriel Bebel, police officer and chauffeur, 'disappeared': Gabriel Bebel, a police officer and official driver for the Presiding Judge at the special military court, was arrested with three other people at the Judge's home in October 1991.

It appears that soldiers singled out the Judge's house because a number of their colleagues were awaiting trial on criminal charges, and were thought likely to be sentenced to death and executed.

A few months later the Government claimed that all those arrested had been released, but as it did not publish the names of those detained or released, this was impossible to verify.

ACTION

For each of these cases please write to the President of Chad, Colonel Idriss Deby, urging him to ensure that each case is thoroughly investigated and that the perpetrators of these human-rights violations are brought to justice.

WRITE TO:

Excellence Monsieur le Colonel Idriss Deby,
Président de la République,
Présidence de la République,
N'Djamena
République du Tchad



WORLD WIDE APPEAL

WHAT'S IN A LETTER?

'During our investigations we have had the chance to keep a record of more than 4,000 cards and letters sent by Amnesty International members in Britain. During the dictatorship of Hissene Habré, you were the only support for the persecuted Chadians.'

MAHAMAT HASSAN ABAKAR, PRESIDENT OF THE COMMISSION OF INVESTIGATION, REPUBLIC OF CHAD

SOME TIPS:

- Identify yourself by profession and nationality to emphasize the fact that all kinds of people are concerned about human rights.
- Writing appeals is not difficult. Letters need not be beautifully composed or very long. Their aim is to show concern and make a clear, polite request.
- There is no common international practice for addressing authorities, but you may safely use 'Your Excellency' for Heads of State such as Presidents, Prime Ministers, other Ministers and Ambassadors.
- Identify the person for whom you are writing clearly. State the person's name and details such as the date of arrest and place of detention, if known.
- Follow the directions in the appeal; eg, AI asks for the unconditional release of prisoners of conscience only.
- Stay within AI's Mandate and don't discuss ideology or politics. AI is a non-partisan organization: it opposes human-rights violations, not governments or political systems.

SOUTH AFRICA

JOHANNES MAISHA 'STANZA' BOPAPE, a community activist from Pretoria's Mamelodi township, 'disappeared' in 1988, several days after being arrested by the security police. Despite his family's repeated public appeals for information, no trace of him has ever been found.

In January 1993 South African newspapers published the claims of a former police officer, John Botumile Mokale, who alleged that he had knowledge of secret graves where Stanza Bopape and other murdered detainees were buried.

Although his claims have not been corroborated, John Mokale's allegations heightened public concern that no proper investigation had ever been conducted by the authorities into Stanza Bopape's 'disappearance'.

The police have consistently maintained that Stanza Bopape escaped from their custody on the night of 12 June 1988, while police officers were transporting him from Johannesburg to Vereeniging.

They have not plausibly explained how Stanza Bopape managed to unshackle himself from handcuffs and leg irons or why they told Stanza Bopape's lawyer on 17 June that he was still in custody, only announcing two weeks later that he had 'escaped'.

The 'intensive investigation' promised by South Africa's Minister of Law and Order in June 1990 produced no results, and the Government has refused to name the police officers responsible for interrogating and guarding Stanza Bopape.

• Please send appeals urging the Government to conduct a full, judicial inquiry into the 'disappearance' of Stanza Bopape and to bring to justice those responsible for his death to:

FW De Klerk
State President
State President's Office
Private Bag X83
Pretoria 0001
SOUTH AFRICA

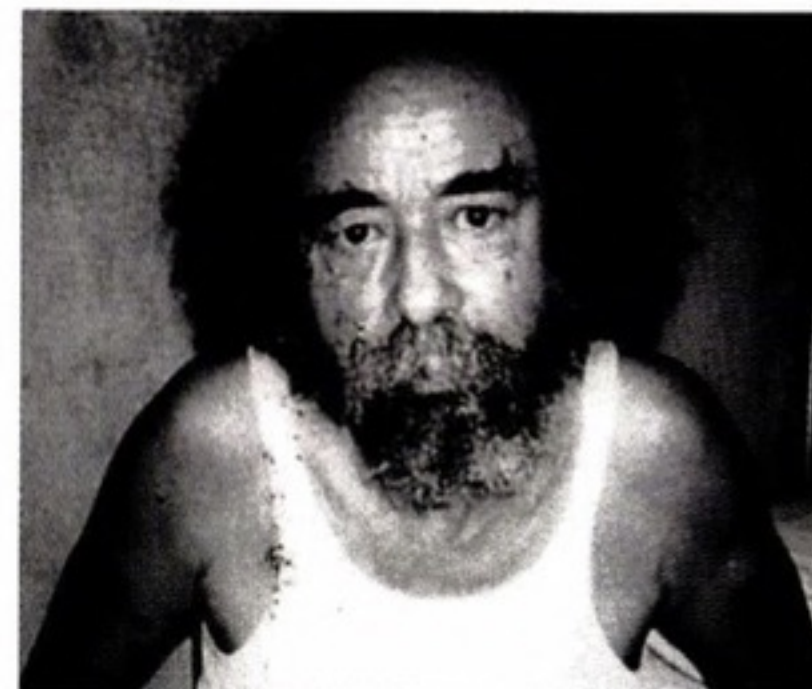
In January 1993 Bheki Nkosi, who had been detained with Stanza Bopape, made public a statement he had sworn in 1989 in which he testified that his captors told him that they had shot and killed Stanza Bopape.

DJIBOUTI

ALI AREF BOURHAN: a former president, he is serving a 10-year sentence imposed after a grossly unfair trial at which he was convicted of plotting to overthrow the Government. He is a prisoner of conscience.

Ali Aref Bourhan was arrested in January 1991 with over 130 other members of the Afar ethnic group and accused of leading a plot to overthrow President Hassan Gouled Aptidon's government.

An Amnesty International representative observed his trial by a security tribunal in July 1992. In a report published in December 1992,



Amnesty International severely criticized the tribunal for violating international standards of fair trial.

Most of the judges were government officials, the rights of the defence were restricted, and the convictions of Ali Aref Bourhan and 13 other defendants were mainly based on evidence obtained under torture.

Amnesty International believes Ali Aref Bourhan was imprisoned on the pretext of a fabricated 'plot' because the Government apparently saw him as a threat. His appeal to the Supreme Court has not yet been heard.

Ali Aref Bourhan, 58, married with two children, was active in politics for the last 20 years of French colonial rule, becoming President of the Council of Government shortly before Djibouti attained independence in 1977.

• Please send appeals for the immediate and unconditional release of Ali Aref Bourhan to:

SE Monsieur Hassan Gouled Aptidon
Président de la République
La Présidence, BP 6,
République de Djibouti
DJIBOUTI



BAHRAIN

MOHAMMAD JAMIL 'ABD AL-AMIR AL-JAMRI: A 33-year-old civil engineer with the Ministry of Health, he was arrested in 1988 and was reportedly tortured in custody to force him to confess. In 1990 the State Security Court sentenced him to 10 years' imprisonment after an unfair trial.

Mohammad al-Jamri, son of a leading religious figure in Bahrain's majority Shi'a community, was accused of spying for Iran, a charge he has vigorously denied.

He was convicted by the State Security Court, which tries all cases concerning internal or external security. Procedures in this court fail to comply with international standards for fair trial.

Proceedings are usually held in camera, and there is no provision for appeal against either the verdict or the sentence. Mohammad al-Jamri, like many other defendants tried by this court, was denied access to his lawyer until immediately before his trial.

Those tried before the State Security Court can be convicted on the basis of uncorroborated confessions, which need only be recorded by the public prosecutor or the police, a practice which has encouraged the security forces to resort to torture to obtain confessions.

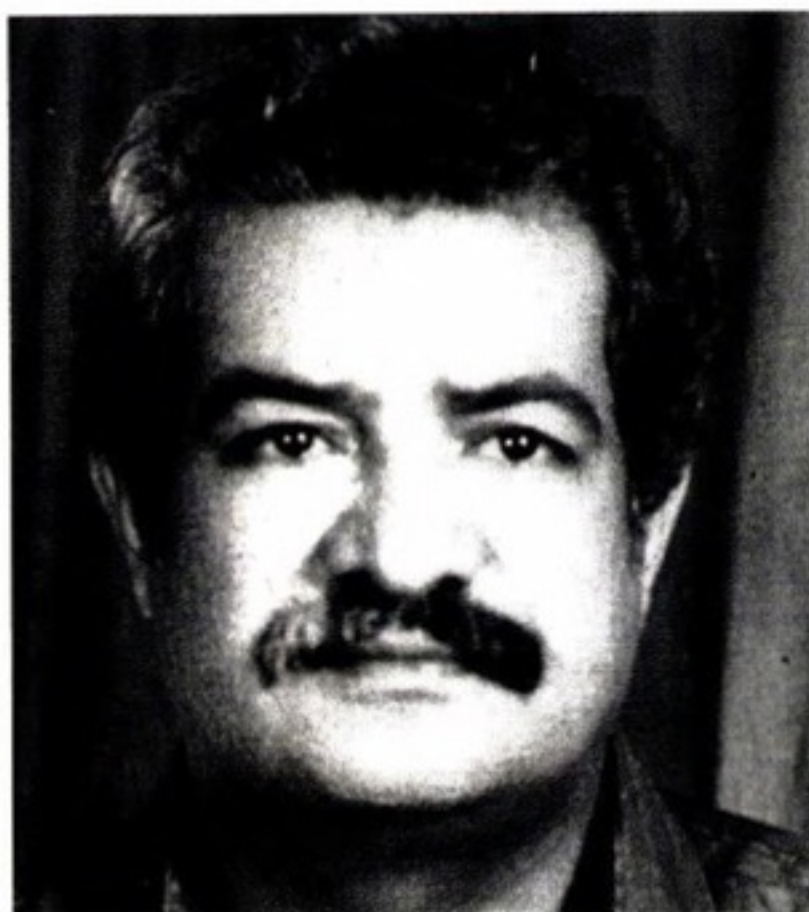
Following his arrest, Mohammad al-Jamri was reportedly severely tortured in al-Qal'a Prison. Before he made his 'confession', which he repudiated in court, he was severely beaten and made to stand still on one spot, blindfolded and with his hands bound behind his back, for four days. He is now reportedly held in al-'Adliya Prison.

• *Please send courteous letters appealing for a re-trial, according to international standards for fair trial, and for an investigation of the torture allegations, to:*

His Highness al-Sheikh 'Isa Bin Salman Al Khalifa
Office of His Highness the Amir
The Amiri Court
Rifa'a Palace
Rifa'a
BAHRAIN

IRAQ

'AZIZ AL-SAYYID JASSEM: A 51-year-old Shi'a Muslim and writer from al-Nasiriyya, he has been detained for almost two years, apparently because he failed to write articles supporting



the Iraqi Government following the invasion of Kuwait. There has been no definite news of his fate or whereabouts since January 1992.

'Aziz Jassem, a well-known Iraqi writer and journalist, and a member of the Ba'ath Party since 1963, was arrested in Baghdad on 14 April 1991 by plain clothes members of the security forces. He was taken to Mudiriyyat al-Amn al-'Amm, General Security Directorate, in Baghdad, where he was reportedly held in solitary confinement and tortured. His family received no news of him for more than a year.

He was apparently in poor health, suffering from diabetes and a heart condition. Reports that he was transferred to Iraqi intelligence headquarters in Baghdad in July 1992, and that he has since been permitted regular visits from his family, cannot be confirmed.

Arab writers and journalists have appealed on 'Aziz Jassem's behalf, but although the authorities acknowledged his arrest, they have refused to provide details of the charges against him or information on his fate or current whereabouts.

The author of numerous books on subjects including women's rights and the Kurdish question,

• *Due to UN sanctions against Iraq, please send courteous letters appealing for clarification of the fate, whereabouts and legal status of 'Aziz al-Sayyid Jassem to:*

Zuhair Ibrahim
Chargé d'affaires
Iraqi Embassy
21 Queens Gate
London SW7 5JG UK

'Aziz Jassem also edited and wrote for various government publications including al-Qadisiyya, al-Ghad and al-Thayra. He had been briefly detained several times in the past reportedly because of his writing.

BRAZIL

EDMEIA DA SILVA EUZEBIO, one of a group of mothers who had campaigned for investigations into the 'disappearances' of their children, was murdered in Rio de Janeiro on 15 January.

Eight days before her death, Edméia da Silva Euzébio had testified in the judicial inquiry on the 1990 'disappearance' of her son and 10 other young people, and had denounced the involvement of military and civil police officers in the abduction.

Witnesses say that on the afternoon of 15 January, Edméia da Silva Euzébio and a woman friend, Sheila da Conceição, were walking in downtown Rio de Janeiro when two

• *Please send appeals calling for a thorough investigation into the killing of Edméia da Silva Euzébio and Sheila da Conceição and urging that those responsible be brought to justice, to:*

State Governor of Rio de Janeiro, Sr Leonel Brizola
Palacio Guanabara
Rua Pinheiro Machado 22.231
Rio de Janeiro
BRAZIL

armed men jumped out of a car and began to chase them. The women tried to run away, but the men shot them dead before escaping in the car.

Edméia da Silva Euzébio, along with other mothers of the 'disappeared', had received a number of death threats. On the evening of 26 January 1992, for instance, three military police officers allegedly involved in the 'disappearance' of her son are said to have sent the mothers a message threatening them with a worse fate than their sons had suffered.

Edméia da Silva Euzébio was the mother of Luiz Henrique da Silva, one of 11 young people abducted on 26 July 1990 from a farm in Magé, Rio de Janeiro. Although a report by the Intelligence Section of the Military

Police identified the perpetrators as military and civil police officers, no one has been charged with the abductions.

PHILIPPINES

EDILBERTO BENSEN, his pregnant wife HAYDEE, and their 10-year-old daughter, MARY GRACE, were shot dead on 28 August 1991 at their home in Murcia, Negros Occidental, by armed men believed to be soldiers.

According to eye-witnesses, about 20 men, two of them armed, believed to be members of the 61st Infantry Battalion of the Philippine Army, arrived at the Bensens' house at around 9pm. They ordered Edilberto Bensen to come out and killed him with a burst of gunfire. His wife and daughter were also shot dead.

Edilberto and Haydee Bensen were active trade unionists; relatives and neighbours believe this is why they were killed. He was a district leader of the National Federation of Sugar Workers and she was a member of the Association of Women Workers. Military officials claimed that the family had been killed by the New People's Army (NPA), the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines. They said that Edilberto Bensen had angered the NPA by joining a militia group used by the army for counter-insurgency operations. But family and friends have denied these allegations and stated that Edilberto Bensen refused to join the militia.

The official Commission on Human Rights (CHR) conducted an investigation into the case. In March 1992 it reported that the investigation had been suspended and the case dossier 'archived'. The CHR appears to have accepted the Army's explanation of the killing. However, neither the military nor the CHR have provided evidence that the NPA was responsible and the perpetrators remain at large.

• *Please appeal for the investigation into the killings to be reopened and for the perpetrators to be brought to justice, to:*

President Fidel Ramos
Malacañang Palace
Manila
PHILIPPINES

Building human rights



STUART FRANKLIN / MAGNUM

URGENT ACTION

ROBINSON Lusitante Mendua was detained in Colombia by members of the armed forces and 'disappeared'. He was press-ganged into working as a 'guide' for the Army (for guide, read pack mule). Within days, Colombia government officials, including the President, were bombarded with thousands of telexes, faxes, telegrams and airmail letters all appealing for the release of Robinson Lusitante.

Against all the odds, he was released.

The messages that helped to save Robinson Lusitante's life were generated by a powerful and effective technique used by Amnesty International — the 'urgent action'.

A lawyer's association in Colombia which had been working on behalf of Robinson wrote to Amnesty International: 'We believe that the international urgent action was responsible for Robinson Lusitante's reappearing alive'.

Urgent Action letter-writers regularly receive such testimonies to the effectiveness of their efforts. Several Urgent Actions received a letter from Glen Sonwabo Thomas who was released from detention in South Africa without charge or restriction in May 1990: 'The pressure you exerted on the South African Government has been a great success. If it was not for your efforts, I would still be in detention.'

Others received a letter from Sanan Wongsuthi, a prisoner of conscience in Thailand who was released in 1988: 'I would like to thank you for everything.. By help of Amnesty International I have got the freedom. I would like to thank you very much again.'

The Urgent Action network involves people like you who are prepared to send urgent messages to government authorities in different countries on behalf of prisoners who are in imminent danger.

Urgent Actions are often issued in an effort to save a particular prisoner from torture, death or medical neglect; from an unfair trial, judicial death penalty or extrajudicial execution. Swift response is half the battle and Urgent Action letter-writers can not only receive case-sheets by first-class post but also by fax and electronic mail.

● **To join the Amnesty International Urgent Action network, or to find out the address of your local Amnesty group, contact your national Amnesty office (see right for address).**

Worth reading...

Amnesty International Reports

Prisoners of conscience

Despite hundreds of releases at the end of last year, thousands of political prisoners remain in Syrian jails, where many have been tortured and some have died.

Syria: political prisoners still detained and tortured despite mass releases, July 1992.

Children

In the past three years 176 street children have been murdered in the Brazilian town of Aracaju alone. The killings continue in Brazil's major cities.

Brazil: extrajudicial execution of street children in Sergipe, July 1992.

Refugees

The Japanese Government is shirking its responsibilities towards Chinese asylum-seekers fleeing human-rights violations and threatens others with deportation.

Japan: inadequate protection for refugees and asylum seekers, April 1993.

Ill-treatment and racism in custody

A man from Benin living in France is knocked off his motorbike by a car then beaten up by the driver; in Portugal an African is kicked, then sprayed with a high-pressure hose; the cases often go unheeded by police.

Europe: racism and ill-treatment in custody, Feb 1993.

Disappearances

Governments around the world routinely 'disappear' innocent people for expressing their peacefully held beliefs. In Morocco hundreds are kept for years in secret

detention centres in cruel and degrading conditions. *Morocco: breaking the wall of silence — the 'disappeared' in Morocco, 1993.*

Prison conditions

Prisoners in Malawi are subject to cruel, inhuman and degrading conditions which in some cases amount to a protracted form of extra-judicial execution.

Malawi: prison conditions, cruel punishment and detention without trial, Feb 1992.

Torture

Torture occurs in every Indian state. Opponents of the Government are beaten, electrocuted, hanged and raped. Torture is also endemic in China, where the use of electric shocks and leg irons is widespread.

Torture in China, Dec '92; India: time for change, Apr '92.

Death Penalty

Between July 1988 and Jan 1989, Amnesty recorded at least 2,500 executions of political prisoners. Reports of executions for religious belief continue.

Iran: executions continue unabated, Oct 1992.

Reports published in 1993

Australia: a criminal-justice system weighted against Aboriginal people.

Bosnia: rape and sexual abuse by armed forces.

Chile: torture and ill-treatment continue.

UK/N Ireland: the right of silence.

United States: human rights and American Indians.

World Conference on Human Rights: Facing up to the Failures.

● **Contact your national office of Amnesty International to buy copies of these reports.**

CONTACT POINTS

AOTEAROA/NEW ZEALAND

Amnesty International, PO Box 793, Wellington 1. Tel: (04) 499-3349. *Council for International Development*, PO Box 24-003, Wellington. Tel: (04) 4726-375.

AUSTRALIA

Amnesty International, Private Bag 23, Broadway, NSW 2007. Tel: (02) 281-4188. Offices in all states. *Committee to Defend Black Rights*, 195 George St, Redfern, NSW 2016. Tel: (02) 698-9826.

CANADA

Amnesty International, 214 Montreal Rd, Suite 401, Vanier, Ontario K1L 1A4. Tel: (613) 744-7667. *Amnistie Internationale*, 6250 Boulevard Monk, Montreal, PQ H4E 3H7. Tel: (514) 766-9766. *International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development*, 63 Rue de Bresoles, Montreal, PQ H2Y 1V7. Tel: (514) 283-6073.

IRELAND

Amnesty International, Sean MacBride House, 8 Shaw St, Dublin 2.

UNITED KINGDOM

Amnesty International, 99-119 Rosebery Ave, London EC1R 4RE. Tel: (071) 814-6200. *Anti-Slavery International*, 180 Brixton Rd, London SW9 6AT. Tel: (071) 582-4040. *Minority Rights Group*, 379 Brixton Rd, London SW9 7DE. Tel: (071) 978-9498. *Rights and Humanity*, 65 Swinton St, London WC1X 9NT. Tel: (071) 837-4188. *Article 19* (Tel: 071-403-4822), *Africa Watch* (Tel: 071-378-8008) and *Index on Censorship* (Tel: 071-359-0161) can all be found at the same address: 90 Borough High St, London SE1 1LL. *Survival International*, 310 Edgware Rd, London W2. Tel: (071) 723-5535.

UNITED STATES

Amnesty International, 322 8th Ave, New York, NY 10001. Tel: (212) 807-8400. *Human Rights Watch (incorporating Africa Watch, Americas Watch, Asia Watch, Helsinki Watch, Middle East Watch and Fund for Free Expression)*, 485 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10017-6104. Tel: (212) 972-8400.

GULF WAR

EXPORT LICENSE

NRC LICENSE NO. DCS/DFU. 11

XU08643
Amendment No. 03

THIS LICENSE EXPIRES 31 March 1992

United States of America
Nuclear Regulatory Commission

Pursuant to the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended, and the Energy Reorganization Act of 1974 and the regulations of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission issued pursuant thereto, and in reliance on statements and representations heretofore made by the licensee, a license is hereby issued

LICENSEE: Metals, Inc.

NAME: 1) Royal Ordnance Specialty Metals, L Featherstone, Cat & Kittens Lane Wolverhampton, Staffs WV10 7NX England

ADDRESS: 2) Royal Ordnance PLC Ammunition Division Euxton Lane Chorley, Lancashire PR7 6AD England (the manufacture of munitions)

ULTIMATE CONSIGNEE IN FOREIGN COUNTRY

The licensee is authorized to export 500,000 kilograms of depleted uranium in the form of metal.

This amendment adds a second address for the ultimate consignee.

All other conditions remain unchanged.

8905020282 B90421
PDR EXPORT
XU-8643 PNU

Neither this license nor any right under this license shall be assigned or otherwise transferred in violation of the provisions of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended, and the Energy Reorganization Act of 1974

This license is subject to the right of recapture or control by Section 106 of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended and to all of the other provisions of said Acts, now or hereafter in effect and to all valid rules and regulations of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

THIS LICENSE IS INVALID UNLESS SIGNED BELOW BY AUTHORIZED NRC REPRESENTATIVE

Marvin R. Peterson, Assistant Director for International Security

DATE OF ISSUANCE APR 21 1993

License to kill: evidence of the deadly trade.

Storm fallout

Radioactive dust from Coalition shells inhaled by Iraqi children

IN a shocking new development it now emerges that the Coalition forces used uranium-tipped ammunition in Iraq during the Gulf War. Shells and bullets made in this way to improve performance produce carcinogenic dust on impact. Iraqi children have inhaled the dust – and are beginning to die from cancer as a result.

Mr Andy Munn, of the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority, confirms that when this kind of ammunition hits its target 'it throws up dust which is toxic and carcinogenic... clearers-up, civilians, children playing in or even looking into burned-out vehicles could be affected.' The uranium used was waste from the nuclear industry. There are thought to be some 40 tons of it in various parts of Iraq.

According to Dr Eric Hoskins of the International Harvard Study Team, childhood cancer and leukaemia rates are soaring. In Basra, he reports, children have been making 'glove puppets' out of used, cigar-sized, uranium-tipped bullets.

US officials are quoted as saying that the weaponry is only 'very, very mildly' radioactive. But when a director of the renowned Albert Schweitzer Institute returned from Iraq with one of the bullets – intended for analysis – in his pocket he was arrested at Berlin Airport and the bullet was

placed in a lead-lined case. Two independent laboratories subsequently confirmed its radioactivity.

Children are particularly vulnerable to the effects of radiation because, as they grow, their cells multiply fast. Nearly a quarter of the Iraqi population of 18 million are children. Ironically, in this irradiated land, nuclear medicine for treatment of cancers is banned under the terms of international sanctions against Iraq.

A recently returned observer, Dr Michael Viola of the oncology division, Stony Brook University, New York, says: 'Uranium kills kids... It is quite clear that the functional embargo of medicines, vaccines, hospital and laboratory equipment has resulted in a complete collapse of the health delivery system... Thirty per cent of children in various parts of Iraq demonstrated clinical evidence of malnutrition... Sanctions could be reconstructed to allow "oil for medicine" and these transactions monitored by international relief agencies.'

Unless some such provision can be made for what UNICEF calls the 'most traumatized child population in the world' – of whom some 100,000 are likely to die this year alone – they will indeed vanish 'not with a bang, but with a whimper'.

Felicity Arbuthnot

Tropical trouble

By the year 2010 four million people – twice as many as now – will die every year from the top five tropical diseases: malaria, leishmaniasis, sleeping sickness, lymphatic filariasis and schistosomiasis. If you add leprosy, Chagas disease and river blindness (onchocerciasis) to the list more than half the world's population lives in areas where they are at risk from tropical disease. According to the World Health Organization, the soaring death rate is the result of population movements, environmental change, economic upheavals and the growing resistance of the malaria parasite to existing drugs. For the past two decades many of the world's pharmaceutical companies have ignored tropical diseases because they affect mostly poor countries and profit margins are too small.

World Health Organization Press Release 25 March 1993

World Bank out of Narmada

The Indian Government has asked the World Bank to cancel its remaining loans for a half-finished \$3 billion scheme to dam the Narmada river in north-western India, following intense criticism of the project's impact on the environment and on the villagers who will lose their land. Campaigners against the scheme are celebrating victory. But the Indian authorities are likely to press ahead. Officials told the World Bank that it was trampling on the country's self-respect by imposing too many conditions – and that they are asking the giant brewers Heineken (slogan 'Reaches the parts other beers cannot reach') for sponsorship instead.

The Independent 14 March 1993

Mozambique moves



The commander-in-chief of Renamo, the Mozambican guerilla opposition, has pledged never to take up arms again. The promise by Afonso Dhlakama was in response to a report on the BBC World Service in Portuguese that Renamo was preparing to resume war. Meanwhile in March the Limpopo railway corridor, crucial to the economy of both Mozambique and Zimbabwe, was officially reopened by President Joaquim Chissano after six years of reconstruction work by an international workforce. First closed by sanctions against Rhodesia in 1976, then sabotaged by Renamo during the conflict of the 1980s, the reopening of the railway is also a success for the Southern African Development Community, which helped to put together the huge technical and financial programme that made it possible.

Mozambique New Agency, AIM Reports, No 5 1993

THE DEVELOPMENT DEBATE

Cruel trees

Chipko 'huggers' oppose new plantations in India

THROUGHOUT the 1970s a series of protests against tree-felling in the North Indian state of Uttar Pradesh captured the attention of the world's media. The opposition movement, inspired by Gandhian activists, was called 'chipko' – which means 'to hug' or 'to embrace' – because they hugged trees earmarked for felling, braving the timber-cutters' raised axes.

In 1980 the government of Indira Gandhi recommended a 15-year ban on felling in the region. Chipko was hailed as a success-story and the camera crews and journalists packed up and went home.

Over a decade later, however, the villagers' struggle continues. The focus has now shifted to new pine and eucalyptus 'social forestry' plantations being promoted by development agencies.

Villagers, who see the forest as a living resource on which they depend for their basic necessities and from which they take only according to need, directly confront the view of logging concerns who see the forest as a timbermine to be converted into cash.

In Tehri, a busy market town in a deep tributary valley of the Ganges, Chipko activist Sunderlal Bahugana, explains the objections:

'Cruel trees like pine and eucalyptus take up a lot of water from the soil and give nothing back. The ground in a pine plantation is barren like a desert. What the villagers need are deciduous trees such as walnut and oak that supply what I call the five Fs – food in the form of nuts and berries, firewood, fodder from leaves, fibre to make rope or baskets and rich soil from fertilizer.'

Bahugana sees 'social forestry' – often funded through agencies like the World Bank – as just another aspect of the prevailing development model whose real agenda, he believes, is to turn the planet's resources into commodities for the market.

'The World Bank is trying to turn the land into raw material,' he says, 'but this approach is misguided. Planting species that produce little soil, water and fresh air undermines our real capital base – the environment... The villagers know the best way to manage the forest and we encourage them to use this knowledge and not to depend on aid agencies or the Government to advise them.'

In the Ashram at Silyara he and his wife Vimala have set up an 'empowering centre' for village women. Set among trees and flowering bushes on a steep hillside it provides education for 120 girls from neighbouring villages. Vimala describes how the women's enhanced confidence recently enabled them to fight a scheme to plant 20,000 pine trees in the valley.



Women lead the opposition to the 'timber-mine' view of forests.

'When the men hired to plant the trees came,' she says, 'the women sent them away and refused to plant conifers. They are now demanding that women are appointed as forest guards so that only useful species such as oak are planted.'

In the Henwell Valley Chipko activist Dhum Singh Negi helped to set up the 'Greening the Himalaya' project. He explains that Bijana Devi was chosen as the forest guard in Kumali village because as a widow she had no other source of income. She protects a patch of 400 walnut and 1,200 sweet chestnut saplings in a steep gully by a stream. 'Our knowledge of trees that no longer grow in the region has to some extent been lost,' she says, 'but through the project the villagers are rediscovering some of this traditional knowledge.'

The first recorded instance of tree-hugging in India took place in 1730 in the desert state of Rajasthan; 363 women of the Bishnoi people were killed when they tried to save a grove of kejadi trees. The Bishnoi worship the kejadi as it brings life to the desert and provides animal fodder in even the harshest drought.

This story should, Dhum Singh Negi believes, remind the World Bank and others funding social-forestry plantations that replacing indigenous tree-cover with new species disregards the human factor in the ecological equation. Such programmes must consider people to whom the natural environment is not just an object of curiosity, a set of statistics or a collection of commodities – it is a part of themselves.

Les Bailey

Last rest-in-space

Sunray, a major Japanese mortician, has launched plans for an egg-like tower with capacity for 10,000 bodies – on the moon. A rapidly ageing population and scarcity of land in Japan have created a serious undertaking problem. Sunray expects to spend up to \$40 million on rocket-related expenses and has chosen a construction company for work on the moon. The company is not yet ready for customers, but says hundreds of people have called for details.

Sunday Morning Star Malaysia

Landmine auction

An international scramble has begun by foreign firms and governments for the massive contracts involved in clearing Angola of an estimated 20 million land mines – more than two for each of the country's nine million citizens. The majority of the mines are attributed to the rebel Unita forces and are of US origin. A report by Africa Watch entitled *Landmines in Angola* says that commercial companies may be inflating the size of the problem in their own interests. Royal Ordnance in the UK, the Lonrho conglomerate and the US Equator Bank are all bidding for the work. Germany's Cap Anamur humanitarian organization wanted to ship in a number of decommissioned Soviet tanks for mine clearance – but Africa Watch says it makes no sense to bring more unwanted tanks into a country that already has a surfeit of them.

Arthur Gavshon / Gemini

No help without orders

Early in the morning of 10 March the Cambodian police alerted the UN peacekeepers in Siem Reap that the Khmer Rouge had attacked a nearby village and killed several Vietnamese villagers. When the peacekeepers reached the site they discovered 34 men, women and children were dead. Some 33 injured people were moved to an overcrowded hospital where they lay on the floor waiting for attention. Doctors at a nearby well-equipped and virtually empty UN military hospital did not offer help because, one of them said, they had no orders to do so.

Far Eastern Economic Review vol 156 no 14



UN troops waiting to be told what to do.

SOUTH AFRICA

Unsightly site

Squatters segregated from tourist trap

A SOUTH AFRICAN hotel owner, Jeff Warren-Smith, faces a fine or six months' imprisonment for allowing squatting on his land. He says he cannot bring himself to demolish the homes as the court has ordered, and so he has become the first landowner in Cape Province to be convicted under the Prevention of Illegal Squatting Act.

Mr Warren-Smith runs the Morgan's Bay Hotel on the Eastern Cape's Wild Coast, a prime tourist destination. Three years ago he bought a piece of land on which to house his employees. Workers evicted from nearby farms swelled the numbers who already lived there. Some were born on the land, like Wally Xolo, who returned two years ago when the pineapple farm he worked on closed down. Now more than one hundred people live there, mostly in traditional houses of wood, thatch and mud.

Although only a few of the residents worked for Mr Warren-Smith he refused to



Guilty of compassion: Jeff Warren-Smith, convicted for refusing to evict squatters.

evict them. They have nowhere else to go. 'I didn't give them permission to live there,' he says, 'but I will not let them be kicked out. These people stayed on this property long before I came.'

The Regional Council prosecuted him on the grounds that the buildings did not meet health-and-safety standards. But in practice the Prevention of Illegal Squatting Act is

being used to enforce racial segregation, particularly around towns where squatter areas grow as people flee the poverty of rural areas. The Council insists that the Morgan's Bay squatters must move to the Kei Mouth township about five miles away, which is already overcrowded.

Mr Warren-Smith points out that the tourist industry needs black workers for the hotels and holiday homes but keeps their homes at a distance for fear of confronting tourists with the poverty in which they live. He argues that the real issue is the Council's failure to provide adequate housing for blacks where they work. 'The only person to complain about squatters did not want black people to reside in Morgan's Bay,' he told the court.

Three years after Nelson Mandela's release from prison and with South Africa on the threshold of a political settlement, the case is an ironic reminder that some apartheid laws are still in force – and are being used. The 'squatters' of Morgan's Bay have joined others in the continuing campaign for land rights.

Matthew Sherrington

PATRICK GOODENOUGH

MALAYSIA



Above the law and beyond belief, Malaysian Royals have their wings clipped.

Sultans of sleaze

Royal excesses lead to constitutional change

THE subjects of the Malaysian monarchy are, it seems – not unlike their UK counterparts – beginning to tire of their royals. Criticism of the nine royal sultans

(who appoint the King from among their number) was triggered by the alleged beating last November of a field-hockey coach by one of the most flamboyant of the rulers, the 61-year-old Sultan of Johor.

Parliament, unused to tackling the royals, unanimously condemned the beatings and concluded that the Sultan had abused his traditional immunity from prosecution when he assaulted coach Douglas Gomez. Malaysia's no-nonsense Prime Minister, Dr Mahathir Mohamad, moved to change the constitution and make the royals accountable. This precipitated a constitutional crisis.

During the confrontation word went out from the Government that the press, usually restrained in its coverage of royal stories, was now free to report as it wished. The floodgates opened. English, Malay, Chinese and Indian language newspapers had a field-day reporting past 'indiscretions' – murders, beatings, lavish lifestyles and extravagant behaviour.

The public learned that the royals had been beneficiaries of millions of dollars of profits through unpublicized allocations of shares in publicly listed companies. The sale of timber concessions had, for one sultan alone, produced \$103 million. Public money had been spent on building lavish new palaces and constantly remodelling old ones. One sultan kept 200 polo ponies in air-conditioned stables and ran his own Boeing 727 jet. Business debts were uncollectable because sultans were beyond the law. Rolls Royce cars had been imported illegally.

Large sums of money had been spent on gambling and drinking.

Initially the King refused the royal assent for a constitutional amendment bill to make the royals accountable to the law. But after a stand-off the sultans backed down. In a closed-door session with leaders of Mahathir's ruling party they reached a face-saving compromise. The original bill would be amended, but the sultans would still become subject to the law.

Abdul Razak Abdullah / Gemini

END

END Quote

'No, I won't lend them my money. They wouldn't be able to pay it back.'

President Mobutu Sese Seko Koko Ngbendu Waza Banga of Zaire, on being asked if he would consider making some of his personal fortune, estimated at \$5 billion, available for his impoverished country.

ABBAS / MAGNUM



film

The Story of Qiu Ju

directed by Zhang Yimou

Zhang Yimou's latest film is a bold departure from the lush and richly coloured melodrama of such earlier work as *Jou Dou* (an *NI* Film of the Year) and *Raise the Red Lantern*. He eschews exotic spectacle and the rarefied past for a low-key glimpse of contemporary China. Using a hidden camera and a cast that consists almost entirely of non-actors, the director tells the story of one woman's attempt to achieve justice.

Gong Li, Yimou's collaborator and wife, plays Qiu Ju, a young countrywoman expecting her first child. She is a woman with a mission. Her beef is with the local village chief who kicked her husband where it hurts after a careless remark about the chief only having sired daughters. Masculinity is what is at stake here. But it becomes a point of honour which ironically a woman attempts to restore. All Qiu Ju wants is an apology for her husband. It's a quest, though, which leads her a slow dance through Beijing's bureaucratic maze.

The film dawdles in the nicest possible way. It takes its pace from Qiu Ju herself – focused but gentle. As such it allows the audience to linger and observe the smallest of details – the contrasts between city-dwellers and countryfolk, for example, as in Beijing's penchant for pop-star pin-ups rather than the traditional art that decorates the village walls. At first Qiu Ju is presented as a gauche naïve in the big city but her intrinsic wisdom soon makes her savvy to city ways. It's a classic comic ploy, used for example in *Crocodile Dundee*.

But the ultimate joke in this film is a rather sad one: how Qiu Ju's simple, principled demand takes on a ridiculous life of its own and ends up totally out of control. If the starting-point of this film is a question of virility, its final reflection is on the impotence of an individual in the face of the state.

Politics ☆☆☆

Entertainment ☆☆☆

Orlando

directed by Sally Potter

Seductive, witty and sumptuously entertaining, this adaptation of Virginia Woolf's androgynous fantasy does not immediately come across as a political film.

But the politics are there –



A slow dance through the bureaucratic maze: *The Story of Qiu Ju*.

suggestive, deliberate and ultimately liberating. Gender assumptions are unsettled at the outset with the opening line 'He – and there can be no doubt about his sex'. Now there is a touch of the androgynous about Tilda Swinton, who plays the main part, but for a twentieth-century audience nurtured on realism there can be no doubt that this Orlando is a woman. The delightful unsettling continues with the casting of Quentin Crisp in the role of Queen Elizabeth I and Orlando's dalliance with the Russian princess who looks like a boy. It seems like the film is telling us, in the most playful of ways: 'Never mind biology, never mind sexuality. Society decides your gender and it will give you power – or take it away – on the basis of that definition'.

The film is shot through with cultural references – to paintings, books, plays, writers and poets. Although this makes the viewing rich and the detection fun, it does give the film a somewhat elitist feel. This is not helped by the slight treatment of issues of wealth and class. There is little to indicate that the well-heeled modern Orlandos – although aware of sexual politics – have progressed much further on this front than the Elizabethan aristocrat who sees an old peasant woman carrying a

Gender-bent in style: *Orlando*.



bundle of firewood across a frozen river and is moved to reflect not on social conditions but on his own melancholy. In this director-screenwriter Sally Potter is certainly faithful to the spirit of Woolf's text but it leaves an uneasy feeling all the same.

Finally, long-serving subscribers may recognize the name of the film's producer, Christopher Sheppard – not so long ago he was an *NI* editor.

Politics ☆☆☆

Entertainment ☆☆☆☆



books

Women in Movement

by Sheila Rowbotham (Routledge)

Out of the Shadows

by Jo Fisher (Latin America Bureau)

In Sheila Rowbotham's history of feminist social action and thought Germaine Greer, Gloria Steinem and Andrea Dworkin do not get a mention. Yet these are not shocking omissions – the book's purpose is to familiarize the reader with the origins of popular feminist movements (it's interesting just how long some 'radical' ideas have been around) and record a wide range of women's activism.

Women in Movement spans two centuries and painstakingly reconstructs the objectives and gains of myriad struggles without failing to address issues of class and race. It is to Rowbotham's credit that she presents her material in historical context. She notes dispassionately, for example, how the debate on sexuality among 1920s Anglophone feminists was influenced by the popu-

lar focus on eugenics.

The book is intended as an introduction and it is a lively and judicious one, seasoned liberally with little-known anecdotes. Sometimes whole stories get disposed of in a line and the comparisons between disparate cultures can be uneasy. But the scope is still admirably broad.

Politics ☆☆☆☆

Entertainment ☆☆☆☆

Jo Fisher's thoroughly researched book on women's resistance movements in South America focuses on women pushed out of the male-dominated shadows by the brutality of military dictatorships. Over and over the women she interviews inform us that they were able to register their protests precisely because the authorities thought they were of no importance until they were unstoppable.

Fisher ranges from communal kitchens in Chilean shanty towns, to women's labour movements in Uruguay and the much-publicized mothers of the disappeared in Argentina. Though sometimes repetitive and intellectually unadventurous, the book is brought alive by no-nonsense analysis from the women themselves. Most claim their movements aren't feminist, showing a distrust of the middle-class, language-centred debates of the West. Their own reality was much more basic – the absence of food, the imprisonment of partners or children.

An important outcome of these movements born of great turmoil is that they are here to stay: the women realize they cannot fit back into roles tailored by societies where machismo is widespread. Their struggle is not over: democracy has not meant better economic conditions.

Politics ☆☆☆☆

Entertainment ☆☆☆



music

Das Wunder der Heliane

by Erich Korngold (Decca)

Jonny spielt auf

by Ernst Krenek (Decca)

In 1938, Dusseldorf in Nazi Germany staged an exhibition entitled *Entartete Musik* – 'degenerate music'. Its purpose was to demonstrate to the Fatherland the horrors of any music that wasn't about Wagnerian superheroes climbing glaciers. Atonal music, jazz, and 'degenerate subjects' were targeted.

Now Decca has – with grim

purpose – taken up the Nazi phrase to launch a series of music suppressed under the Third Reich. Operas by the almost-forgotten Krenek and Korngold open this ambitious, admirable series, which seeks not just to rehabilitate important music but has an eye firmly on the present.

Jonny was a hit from its premiere in 1927. Although the Austrian Krenek was not Jewish, it's easy to see why the Nazis found his jazz opera degenerate. Jonny, a charmer in an all-black jazz band, has a fondness for stealing but also gets the best tunes. Max, his antithesis, is a glacier-climbing composer riddled with metaphysical doubts: hardly a model Aryan. Above all, **Jonny** was a modern opera, featuring



The 'degenerate' Ernst Krenek.

telephones, radios and cars as well as stage sets influenced by Bauhaus and expressionism.

Korngold's elaborate fantasy **Das Wunder der Heliane** could not have been more different. Although its themes of love, redemption and suffering were typically Wagnerian and his musical style as sugary as Strauss, Korngold was Jewish. Nazi logic thus deemed him degenerate.

Both operas are significant period pieces. If **Jonny's** reception reveals the Nazi loathing for polyculturalism and abstraction, then **Wunder** shows the intricacies involved in separating Korngold – who writes within a firmly German tradition – from 'Aryan' musicians.

In fact the Dusseldorf exhibition was a great success, for unintended reasons. Fed up with a diet of bombastic music and anodyne art, Germans flocked there to get a fix of vibrant music. One of the many lessons that the Nazi experience has given history lies in a simple truth: the existence of purity is contingent on that of impurity. We should never forget it.

Politics ☆☆☆☆

Entertainment ☆☆☆

STAR RATING

Excellent ☆☆☆☆
Very good ☆☆☆
Good ☆☆☆
Fair ☆☆
Poor ☆

Reviews editor: Chris Brazier

Christopher Unborn

... being the book that merged Latin America's future with its present

SOME of the fascination exercised by dystopian novels lies in their unsettling ability to suggest that their bleak vision is not of the future but of the here and now. George Orwell may have pitched his story in some distant – and by implication avoidable – time to come. But *Nineteen Eighty-Four* was really about 1948. Carlos Fuentes' **Christopher Unborn**, first published in Spanish in 1987, looked forward just five years to 1992. Even more so than the English 'prophet', he was really describing a contemporary crisis.

I first read **Christopher Unborn** at a time when, through my work, I was being bombarded by press reports raving about the economic 'miracle' performed by the administration of Mexico's President Carlos Salinas de Gortari. Salinas' Chicago School economics involved opening protected markets, privatizing federal companies and banks and moving to closer integration with the US through the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). The well-publicized fruits of so-called Salinastroika – a sharp reduction in inflation, economic growth and the return of billions of dollars of flight capital – masked the erosion of the average wage's purchasing power and the profoundly undemocratic nature of this brave new world.

The 'modernization' of Mexico has involved revising many of the ideals and institutional legacies of the Revolution – even the reviled dictator Porfirio Diaz has been rehabilitated. But one important stone has been left unturned: the Institutional Revolutionary Party, which has enjoyed more than 60 years of unbroken power, winning the 1988 presidential elections by what was widely held to be massive electoral fraud. Miracles are, after all, undemocratic by nature.

The Mexico of **Christopher Unborn** is culturally, environmentally and economically brutalized by its rulers' prostration before Washington. The US has reinvaded the state of Veracruz at the invitation of the Mexican Government, which is trying to prove its machismo to the rest of the world and its own people; Chiapas and the Gulf states of the Yucatan and Campeche have been turned over to Club Med to generate foreign exchange for the sole purpose of servicing the foreign debt; and the northern territories have broken away to form Mexamerica, a squalid, polluted, semi-independent state thriving off its capitalist industrial complex.

The unregulated scramble to industrialize has

devastating environmental fallout. Thirty million people live in Makesicko City, 'an immense ulcerated crater, a cavity in the universe, the dandruff of the world, the chancre of the Americas, the haemorrhoid of the Tropic of Cancer'. Meanwhile Acapulcalypse drowns in a 'grand wave of poop' seething up from the sewers, the sea and the bathrooms of tourist hotels. You don't need to have studied contemporary Mexico in depth to recognize the accuracy of the picture.

What of the view that the Church of the Free Market has created the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth? In Fuentes' version ministers have given up trying to *do* anything about the quality of life. They accept that, however good the statistics look on paper, 'the vast majority of Mexicans are

screwed'. Instead they resort to increasingly surreal forms of public persuasion. A young girl is plucked from obscurity to become the Mother and Doctor of all Mexicans (Mamadoc). She is injected, implanted, made up so heavily she can't keep her eyes open, and sewn up so she can't have children – 'the perfect mix of Mae West and the Virgin of Guadeloupe'. Touted as the national symbol of womanhood, she announces a competition to select the next president. He will be a child named Christopher born on the stroke of midnight on 12 October 1992 – the 500th anniversary of Columbus' first

landing in the Americas. Enter our narrator: Christopher Unborn himself.

The language of his narrative is perhaps the one source of hope in an otherwise deeply pessimistic vision. Fuentes has long been preoccupied with the question of Mexican identity – how to get on in the modern world without simply becoming a US annex, without suppressing the profound difference between Mexico's pre-Columbian history and that of its European conquerors. He has said that the adoption of European models by Latin American artists in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries represented a denial of 'half of our being, of our past'.

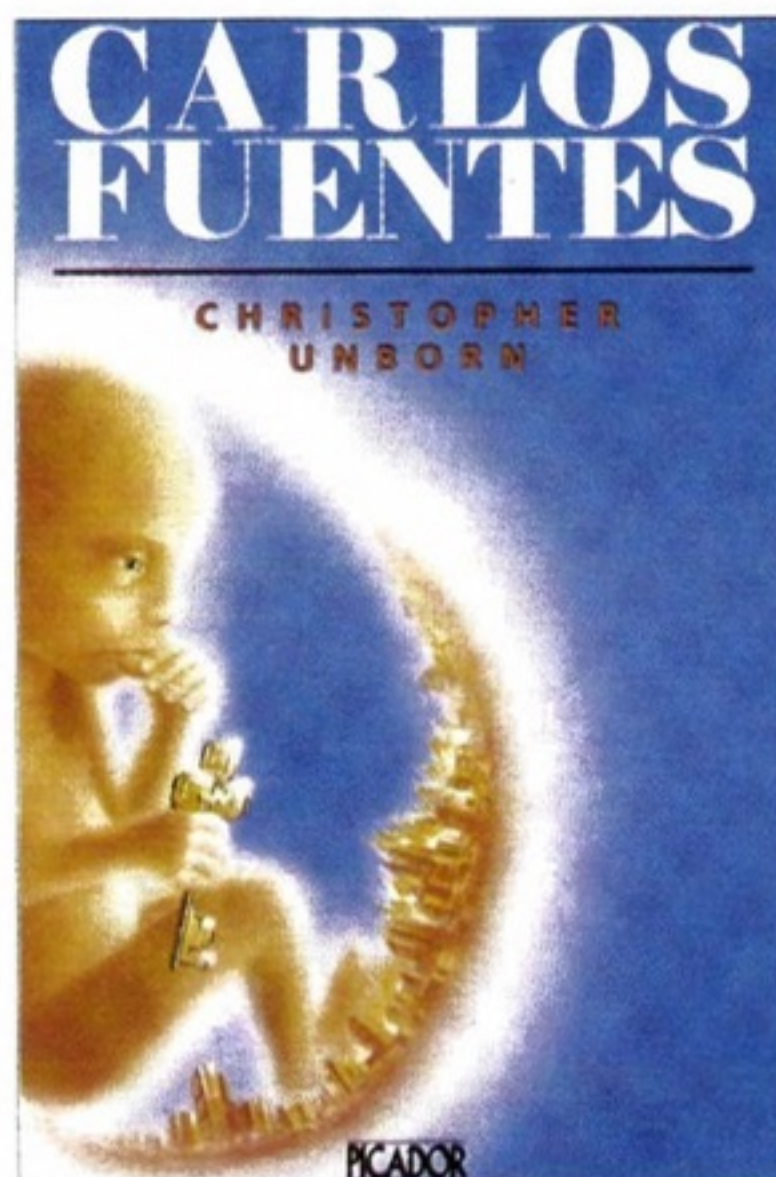
Since the publication in 1958 of his first novel, *Where the Air is Clear*, Fuentes has experimented with time frames, using flashbacks and switching between narrative voices to give form to the statement that 'today began 10,000 years ago'. Some of the results have been more readable than others. In **Christopher Unborn** the sparkling, punning, hybrid language pouring out of an omniscient foetus makes for a funny, learned and eminently readable panorama.

If, like me, you think novels can tell the essential truth of our time, this one is essential history.

Adam Bradbury

Christopher Unborn by Carlos Fuentes (1987)

THE classic





QUESTIONS

...that have always intrigued you about the world will appear in this, your section, and be answered by other readers. Please address your answers and questions to 'Curiosities'.

I've heard that part of the ceremony of Pope-making involves touching of the testicles. If this is true, how and why did this curious custom come about?

Guy Lambert
Oxford, UK

● The Roman Church, according to legend, stipulated that anyone elected Pope should prove that his genitalia were intact. To this end a special chair was fashioned that had a



CAMERA PRESS

horseshoe-shaped seat. The Pope to be would sit on the seat and the cardinals would pass by, checking the papal procession and proclaiming: 'testiculos habet et bene pendentes'. A loose translation being: 'testicles he has and well-hung ones'.

It is unclear when the custom first begun. The reason for its initiation is that according to the Law of Moses eunuchs could not enter into the sanctuary. Leviticus considered castrated animals and humans as unworthy of the sacrifice, both in a literal and a religious sense.

Richard Riddle
New Barnet, UK

● This information from *The First Sex* by Elizabeth Gould Davis (Penguin 1971) provides an answer:

'Joan, a handsome young English girl made her way to Athens disguised as a monk... armed with a degree in philosophy, she came to Rome where Pope Leo IV made her a cardinal. Upon Leo's death in 853 Joan was elected Pope by her fellow cardinals.

The *Catholic Encyclopaedia* goes on to say, "she served as Pope for two years, four months and eight days, when she was discovered to be a woman and stoned to death (she gave birth during a papal procession)"...

'The name "John VIII, a woman from England" graced the papal list from 855 to 1601 ... (when she was)... officially declared mythical... Pope John (872-882) who is now numbered VIII was for seven centuries listed as John IX.

'From the time of Pope Joan, all candidates for the papacy for 700 years had to undergo a physical examination to prove their sex... (this) examination went into effect in 855... Benedict was the first of the popes to submit to the test.'

Cabby Laffy
London, UK

● See *Leviticus 21:16-21*. Guys with crushed testicles are not good enough for God, who is not – as women already know – an equal opportunity employer.

I presume the priests do the checking to ensure that a woman in drag is not trying to sneak into the job, because a dick and nuts are essential to the holy job of being Pope and female genitalia are just not good enough.

Greg Erwin
Quebec, Canada

AWAITING YOUR ANSWERS

Has anyone heard of a vegetarian famine relief organization called VEGFAM? If so what is their address and/or phone number?

Catherine Cawood
Bristol, UK

What are the origins and meaning of the expression 'ethnic cleansing'? Who first used it?

Kathleen Jones
Bishops Castle, UK

I've recently discovered loo roll made from cotton which is so soft I find it difficult to believe that I can use it with a clear conscience.

Can anyone advise me whether it's likely to have been produced in circumstances that are environmentally friendly and politically correct?

Jenny Viseck
London, UK

If you have any questions or answers please send them to *Curiosities*, *New Internationalist*, 55 Rectory Road, Oxford OX4 1BW, UK, or to your local NI office (see inside front cover for addresses).



The ozone mirror

David Edwards looks through the ozone hole – and sees a reflection of human society.

FOR a freelance writer on environmental issues, nothing is more bewildering – and irritating – than continually having to update articles on ozone depletion.

On ozone what? Ozone 'depletion'. Correction: the ozone 'hole'. Correction: the ozone 'problem'. Correction: the ozone 'crisis'. Correction: the ozone 'catastrophe'. Correction: 'the end of the world'.

Get the idea? Now, following a new report from the National Aeronautics Space Administration (NASA) I'm thinking that maybe I should change the 'crisis' to 'catastrophe'. That would be the conservative option. Not that such semantic alterations are likely to make much difference; this job has given me ample opportunities to observe the human capacity to ignore the unpleasant but real.

Two years ago Dr Joe Farman – member of the Stratospheric Ozone Review Group and 'discoverer' of the ozone hole – reported that Europe had lost eight per cent of its stratospheric ozone and would lose at least 20 per cent by 1997. This surely would make people listen, I naively thought at the time.

Actually, very few people knew, understood or cared about the significance of his predictions. To me it seemed that an invisible, silent equivalent of a megatonne hydrogen bomb was slowly exploding over Northern Europe – and no-one wanted to know about it.

Then last year, having quickly written and submitted several articles relating to Mr Farman's warnings, I found myself having to contact the editor of one publication to ask her to make profound last-minute changes to one of my articles. I was wrong, I told her. Everyone was wrong. We were way off – the NASA was now predicting 20-per-cent depletion in 1993!

This year! At first, I could not believe it. Someone was jumping on the alarmist bandwagon. I temporarily joined the side of the sceptics. But soon the implications of the new prediction began to sink in. The United Nations Environmental Policy Institute estimates that for every three-per-cent depletion of ozone there will be an additional 200,000 cases of skin cancer, mostly in Australia, Aotearoa/New Zealand, North America, Europe, Japan and the Soviet Republics. Each three per cent will also lead to 400,000 new cataract cases a year and many of those will go blind – especially in the Third World. Imagine what 20-per-cent depletion would do...

I knew that with this degree of depletion, skin would blister after just two hours of exposure to the sun. Plant life would be affected too: two-thirds of the 200 species tested at elevated levels of ultra-violet already showed adverse reaction. Severe ozone depletion could cut crop yields by a quarter to a half.

But come on! This was not the real world. This could not be happening in *my* lifetime. It was too serious. I had been writing about slowly evolving threats that might significantly harm future generations – not the imminent devastation of modern civilization.

Then NASA confirmed that the high prediction of 20 per cent depletion had already happened in January 1992 over Britain and Northern Europe. But this was the result of special circumstances – namely the eruption of Mount Pinatubo in the Philippines. The exact nature of the chemical reactions were complicated but scientists thought the high quantity of volcanic dust particles at stratospheric level provided superb platforms for human-made chlorines to react with and destroy ozone during the cold weather. The result was a massive acceleration of short-term ozone depletion.

But this provided some comfort. After all, how often do volcanoes erupt on the scale of Mount Pinatubo? We can live with a few years short-term 'special' case depletion while CFCs, Halons and the rest are phased out. Life will go on – yes we have a problem, but a manageable, survivable one.

Unfortunately the articles are now having to be re-written all over again since NASA reported that the extreme levels of ozone depletion recorded in Britain and Europe in 1992 were the *sole* result of human-made industrial chemicals and the Mount Pinatubo effect was a red herring. That great hole over the Northern hemisphere was not a benign, 'special case' blemish but a malignant tumour. And the chemicals that feed its growth are still being produced and released into the stratosphere every day to start their five-year journey to the ozone layer, where they accumulate, destroy and can survive for many decades.

It makes me think of the early ozone researcher who, asked whether he'd had a good day at work, replied: 'The work's going great but it looks

like the end of the world'.

So where will depletion end? Will it end? How much ozone are we going to have to try and live without? Nobody knows. When I saw Dr Joe Farman visibly shaken at a highly emotional press conference two years ago, he did not know, he had no clue that we were a few months, not a few years, away from 20-per-cent ozone depletion.

There is still no ban on CFCs and Halons. Our industries are still producing these chemicals, which once released into the atmosphere start their five-year journey to the ozone layer. Tour operators still promote holidays in the sun and on the ski slopes as though no-one had ever heard of skin cancer.

In the end the unrelenting destruction of the environment provides us with more clues about ourselves than it does about the questionable future of human race. To look into the darkness of the ozone hole and our failure to respond to it in any adequate way is to see modern society reflected in a mirror.

In that mirror we can see that we are not as free as we believed. What we receive as the truth is a version of reality depleted by the economic interests of those who only ever think of short-term gain. ■

David Edwards is a British freelance writer currently working for the Folk University in Sweden.



ILLUSTRATION: CLIVE OFFLEY

Philippines

ATROPICAL archipelago of over 7,000 islands, the Philippines is gradually re-establishing its own national identity as its colonial rulers fade into the pages of history. The presence of the US military ceased in 1992 with the closure of Subic naval base, ending almost a century of direct involvement in the political and social life of the Philippines.

Spain ruled the Philippines from the mid-nineteenth century until defeated in a bloody rebellion in 1898. However, the Philippines quickly fell prey to another colonizing power – the United States. Full independence was achieved in 1946 (after Japanese control during World War Two) but the US still regarded the South-East Asian nation as its 'little brown brother' and influenced it heavily.

Moving away from a culture of dependence on a colonial power and struggling through the teething period of an infant democracy restored after two decades of authoritarian rule under Ferdinand Marcos, the Philippines is, not surprisingly, suffering from a stagnant economy, high inflation and an almost zero growth rate.

President Corazon Aquino, the wife of an opposition



senator assassinated in 1983, was catapulted to power in a revolution in 1986. During her six-year term seven coup attempts disrupted her administration's noble though often weak and misguided efforts to right the wrongs of the Marcos dictatorship.

When she was replaced by

President Fidel Ramos in a democratic election in May 1992 Aquino was considered to have failed on many fronts, particularly land reform and improving the lot of the poor who remained in the stranglehold of poverty whilst an élite minority grew richer.

Regular and devastating

natural disasters such as volcanoes, tidal waves and earthquakes have contributed to the slow development of the Philippines, which lies on the so-called 'ring of fire' and has 21 active volcanoes. Environmental degradation including soil erosion and deforestation contributes to the severity of natural disasters. In late 1991 a flood in a deforested area caused by a tropical storm swept away a whole town leaving 8,000 dead.

The fast-growing population makes demands on the country's economy and environment but with its predominantly Catholic slant, the Philippines remains reluctant to promote contraception.

To boost its wealth the Philippines is trying to develop its tourism industry. Its tropical beaches and linguistic and cultural accessibility to Westerners make it an increasingly popular destination. Another major foreign-exchange earner is remittances from migrant female labour – estimated at 175,000 in 1988 with some 81,000 working as domestics. They were sending home between \$60-\$100 million in foreign exchange each year, outstripping the income from either sugar or minerals.

Belinda Rhodes

AT A glance

Excellent ★★★★★
Good ★★★★
Fair ★★★
Poor ★★
Appalling ★



INCOME DISTRIBUTION ★★

The 100 or so 'elite' families own most land, and dominate the economy and politics.

1981: ★★



SELF-RELIANCE ★★

Culture of dependency changing gradually as US cuts loans and military presence.

1981: ★



POSITION OF WOMEN ★★

Some women in politics but most kept from working by social pressure to bear children: Catholic church strongly against contraception.

1981: ★★

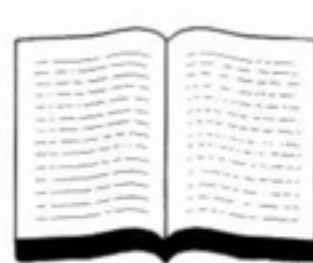


POLITICS

Right-leaning democracy.



1981



LITERACY ★★★★★

88 per cent, but many struggle with two official languages.

1981: ★★★★★



FREEDOM ★★★

Improvements under Aquino but still hundreds of detainees; military accused of political killings. Full press freedom.

1981: ★★



LIFE EXPECTANCY ★★★★★

64 years – good, despite expensive healthcare (US 76 years).

1981: ★★★★★

Leader President Fidel Ramos

Economy GNP per capita \$710 (US \$21,790)

Main exports: Semiconductors, garments, coconut oil, copper, shellfish, bananas, sugar, iron and gold.

Main imports: mineral fuels, electrical and transport equipment, cereals, textile yarns and chemicals.

People 62.4 million

Health Infant mortality 43 per 1,000 live births (US 9 per 1,000)

Culture Filipinos are of Malay, Chinese and Spanish descent.

Religion: Around 85 per cent Catholic; Philippine Independent Church (Aglipayan) 5 per cent, Muslim 5 per cent, Protestant 3 per cent, with animism among indigenous groups.

Languages: Main official language is Tagalog (the most widespread of the Filipino dialects). English is the second official language.

Last profiled in October 1981

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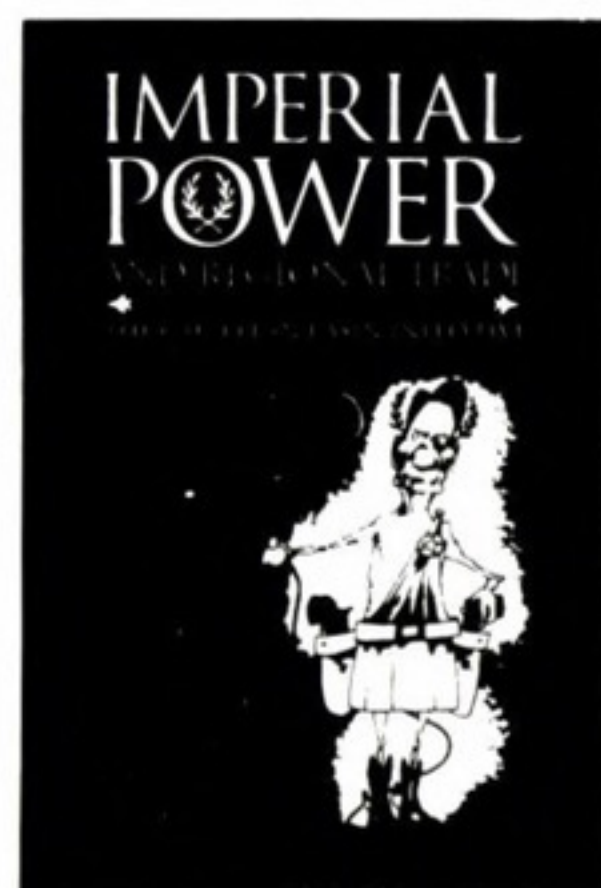
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You've probably never heard of the Marsh Arabs before. You probably never will again.

IN southern Iraq lies a marsh region populated since Biblical times. For over 5,000 years the Marsh Arabs have enjoyed their simple lifestyle here. Then Saddam Hussein came to power.

From the very beginning of his tyranny the Marsh Arabs suffered the violence that all his people have come to know. Vicious torture, executions, bombings and disappearances.

Thousands died in the fierce crossfire of the eight year Iran/Iraq war.

But their slaughter reached a new and horrifying level when they led the Western inspired uprising of March 1991, and were punished mercilessly for opposing their oppressive government.

A twelve-year-old boy clawing at the earth, his throat choking on dirt, was buried alive along with six others.

Thirty-five men, their lungs bursting with water, their feet heavily weighted, sank to a river bed and drowned.

Another seventy were dragged from their hospital beds. Screaming and begging, they were pushed to their deaths from a third floor window.

Crushed by tanks.

"Rise up," George Bush had urged. "Let us fill up the streets and lanes in order to bring Saddam and his supporters down," read the US air drop leaflets. So why, the Marsh Arabs wondered, did the world give them no support when they did fight back?

When their homes were crushed by Iraqi tanks. When their women and children were strapped to those tanks as human shields. When their tongues and ears were cut off, their bodies severed in half and left to rot in the baking sun.

The destruction of the Marsh Arabs has now reached a peak. Ali Hassan al-Majid is now Defence Minister with responsibility for the marsh region.

The man who oversaw the brutal occupation of Kuwait, who co-ordinated the massacre of the Kurds in '87, '88 and '89, is now enacting the same vicious crimes against them.

"You must understand: Saddam wants us dead," was the hysterical cry of a woman to Observer reporter Shyam Bhatia who visited the marshes in February this year.

And does the world community listen? Has it acted on any one of the ten years of human rights abuse in Iraq, heavily documented by Amnesty and others? No.

Hypocrisy and rhetoric.

Despite Amnesty's repeated calls on the international community and the UN to force Saddam Hussein to respect the human rights of his people, nothing effective was done.

Only in December 1990 did John Major and George Bush praise the accuracy of Amnesty's human rights report on Iraq occupied Kuwait.

For one brief moment the human rights of the Iraqi population seemed important.

Why then, when Amnesty reported the butchering of

thirteen Marsh Arabs at a wedding ceremony by helicopter gunships in May 1992, were human rights not important?

Why, when we told of marsh villagers napalmed to death in their own homes, were human rights not important?

And why, while Saddam Hussein is at this moment fouling the marshes with Thallium rat poison, as the Observer reports, to exterminate those Marsh Arabs he hasn't already killed, are human rights still not important enough for governments to react?

Will you help us?

Look at these photographs. They're from a video made by Iraq's military in 1991.

The current Prime Minister is seen actually ordering the genocide of particular Marsh Arab tribes. His troops carry out beatings and violent interrogations.

Even though both the UN special rapporteur and Amnesty reported this clear statement of their intentions back in 1991, nothing effective was done. The no-fly zone, meant to protect the Marsh Arabs, may stop attacks from the air but does nothing to limit the relentless ground attacks.

Even though Saddam Hussein is wiping out another ethnic minority, as he did with the Kurds, nothing is done.

We all saw the harrowing TV pictures then. And, when the world cried out, something was done. Will you allow the savage killing to continue this time?

Are you content to be as negligent as John Major, George Bush and all the other world leaders doing nothing effective? Or will you help us to make a difference?

June will see a UN Conference on Human Rights. A rare chance to push human rights to the top of government agendas, instead of the bottom as it all too often is.

Your chance to help put pressure on Iraq to allow human rights monitors into the marsh regions. To help stop this brutal slaughter of the Marsh Arabs.

Your individual power exerts a pressure that no government can ignore. Link it with the millions of others that form Amnesty International and that power becomes irresistible.

Don't wait for the TV cameras to shock you into action. They may not get to the Marsh Arabs in time.

Don't wait for someone else to do something. They probably won't.

It's down to you. Please join us now. Before it's too late.



A civilian is interrogated while the Defence Minister stands by.



Whimpering and terrified, two men are beaten relentlessly by Iraqi troops.



The casual violence of an interrogation.



An Iraqi soldier drags another man away for questioning.



Iraq's Prime Minister gives the order to "wipe out" Marsh Arab tribes.



Despite Amnesty's repeated calls on the international community and the UN to force Saddam Hussein to respect the human rights of his people, nothing effective was done.

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1 Amnesty International British Section Religious Conference, 'Action for Human Rights in an Interfaith Context', is to be held on Saturday 3 July at Dr Johnson House in Birmingham.

A panel of speakers representing the major faiths will outline what human-rights issues mean to their community, followed by discussion and the formulation of an action plan for future work through Amnesty International. The Conference will run from 10am to 4pm, costing £6, or £3 (unwaged), covering drinks throughout the day. Lunch will operate on a 'bring and share' basis. *Booking forms and further details from: Religious Groups Officer, Amnesty International British Section, 99-119 Rosebery Ave, London EC1R 4RE.*

2 Amnesty International British Section is hosting an afternoon of hearings from expert witnesses of human-rights violations in the UK. The hearings will coincide with a lobby of Parliament aimed at persuading the Government to ratify UN Human Rights mechanisms. A report will go to delegates and media attending the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna. Observers are welcome at the hearings at *Abbey Community Centre, 34 Gt. Smith St, London SW1 on Tuesday 8 June, 10-5.30.*

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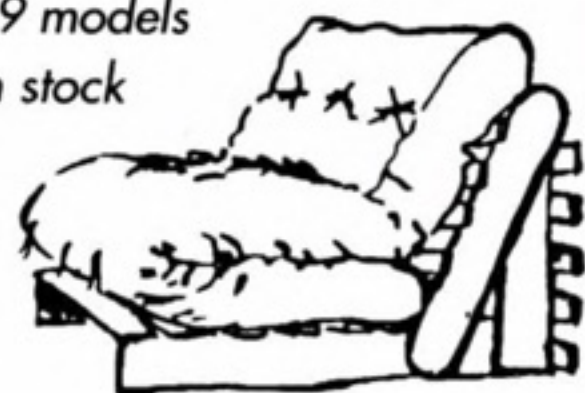
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Foreword by
GLENDIA JACKSON
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